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# The Production of Post-Revolutionary Tehran

A study of transformation of contemporary Tehran  
through a Lefebvrian perspective

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Abstract:**

The present study addresses the transformation of post-revolutionary Tehran beginning with its modern construction since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In so doing, Lefebvre's theories and concepts have been employed as a theoretical framework. However, it is not only a reading of Tehran's transformation through a Lefebvrian lens. It is, also, a modification of Lefebvre's theory through Tehran. Enhanced by the particularity of Tehran, this aim follows by introducing new concepts such as Islamification, externalisation of the interior and internalisation of the exterior, *Arbab* and *Ra'yaat* space and so on to the Lefebvrian conceptual framework.

This research deals with three constitutive elements (economic processes, Islamification, and resistance) from three scales (global, national, and private) in three periods (pre-revolutionary, post-revolutionary, neoliberal). It is shown that Tehran in each period is characterised by constant interaction of the abovementioned elements and interpenetration of these varied scales. In this regard, not only is Tehran examined in distinct periods, but also it is proposed a logic of continuity between these analytically separated epochs. Therefore, this study reconstructs the development of Tehran through its continuities and discontinuities.

This multi-dimensional study enables us to present a holistic view of the transformation of the city of Tehran. Keeping with the idea of totality, the research suggests that while the production of Tehran contains global processes and universal forms, it is differentiated through its particular characteristics such as Islamic ideology and its position within the global order.

# Table of Contents

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Introduction: .....  | 8          |
| Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework.....                                    | 15         |
| <b>1-1- Theoretical framework.....</b>                                   | <b>16</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1- Literature Review: Theses on Tehran .....</b>                  | <b>16</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1-1- First theory: Arbitrary State .....</b>                      | <b>18</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1-2- Second theory: The city of force.....</b>                    | <b>20</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1-3- Arbab-Ra'yaat space.....</b>                                 | <b>23</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1-4- Third theory: Rentier state.....</b>                         | <b>25</b>  |
| <b>1-1-1-5- Forth Theory: The City of Paradox .....</b>                  | <b>28</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2- On Lefebvre.....</b>   | <b>35</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-1- Lefebvrian dialectical logic .....</b>                       | <b>36</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-2- Spatial turn.....</b>  | <b>41</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-3- The dialectical development of space.....</b>                | <b>43</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-4- Historical development of the city.....</b>                  | <b>46</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-5- Synchronic analysis of the urban: city as an oeuvre.....</b> | <b>51</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-6- Use value and exchange value.....</b>                        | <b>55</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-7- Habiting and habitat .....</b>                               | <b>56</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-8- Political aspect of Lefebvre's theory .....</b>              | <b>57</b>  |
| <b>1-1-2-9- Politics of space .....</b>                                  | <b>59</b>  |
| <b>1-1-3- On urban theory .....</b>                                      | <b>61</b>  |
| <b>1-1-4- On the space of resistance .....</b>                           | <b>73</b>  |
| Chapter 2: Methodology.....  | 82         |
| <b>2-1- Introduction.....</b>  | <b>83</b>  |
| <b>2-2- The concern over totality.....</b>                               | <b>84</b>  |
| 2-3- Epistemological concern.....  | 87         |
| <b>2-4- The concretisation of the urban.....</b>                         | <b>91</b>  |
| <b>2-5- The problematic of geographical scale.....</b>                   | <b>95</b>  |
| <b>2-6- Operationalisation .....</b>                                     | <b>100</b> |
| <b>2-7- Limitations of research.....</b>                                 | <b>103</b> |
| Chapter 3: Pre-Revolutionary Tehran.....                                 | 106        |
| 3-1- Introduction.....   | 107        |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 3-2- The incorporation of Iran into the global order.....                           | 107 |
| 3-3- The advent of Iranian modernity.....   | 114 |
| 3-4- The land problematic: The transformation of meaning and function of land ..... | 121 |
| 3-5- Implications of modernisation on Tehran .....                                  | 127 |
| <b>3-5-1- Urbanisation</b> .....  | 128 |
| <b>3-5-2- The emergence of wage labour</b> .....                                    | 136 |
| <b>3-5-3- The spatiality of emerging classes</b> .....                              | 138 |
| <b>3-5-4- The emergence and growth of satellite cities</b> .....                    | 146 |
| 3-6- Conclusion .....   | 153 |
| Chapter 4: The War Period:.....   | 157 |
| <b>4-1- Political Economy of the Revolution</b> .....                               | 159 |
| <b>4-1-1- Nationalisation</b> .....   | 163 |
| <b>4-1-2- Revolutionary institutions:</b> .....                                     | 167 |
| <b>4-1-3- Urban problematic</b> .....   | 172 |
| <b>4-1-3-1- The level of legislation</b> .....                                      | 173 |
| <b>4-1-3-2- Level of Materialisation</b> .....                                      | 179 |
| <b>4-2- The production of Islamic space</b> .....                                   | 192 |
| <b>4-2-1- Hijab</b> .....   | 201 |
| <b>4-2-2- Revolutionary streets</b> .....   | 205 |
| 4-3- The space of resistance .....  | 212 |
| <b>4-3-1- Marginalised groups</b> .....   | 212 |
| <b>4-3-2- Urban squatters</b> .....   | 214 |
| <b>4-3-3- Homes and hotels occupants</b> .....                                      | 216 |
| <b>4-3-4- Street vendors</b> .....  | 218 |
| <b>4-3-5- Hijab protest</b> .....   | 222 |
| 4-4- Conclusion: .....  | 224 |
| Chapter 5: The Reconciliation of the Negated .....                                  | 228 |
| <b>5-1- Introduction</b> .....  | 229 |
| 5-2- Political Economy of the post-war era.....                                     | 231 |
| <b>5-2-1- The First Development Plan</b> .....                                      | 232 |
| <b>5-2-2- Foreign debt</b> .....  | 234 |
| <b>5-2-3- Privatisation</b> .....   | 236 |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>5-2-4- Trade liberalisation .....</b>                     | <b>238</b> |
| 5-3- The land question.....                                  | 240        |
| <b>5-3-1- Level of legislation:.....</b>                     | <b>240</b> |
| <b>5-3-1-1- Independency of City Hall.....</b>               | <b>240</b> |
| <b>5-3-1-2- Master Plan of Tehran.....</b>                   | <b>242</b> |
| <b>5-3-2- Level of practices .....</b>                       | <b>246</b> |
| <b>5-3-2-1- Political economy of urban construction.....</b> | <b>246</b> |
| <b>5-3-2-2- Commercialisation of urban space .....</b>       | <b>249</b> |
| 5-4- Conclusion .....  | 260        |
| Conclusion.....  | 263        |
| Bibliography.....  | 277        |

## List of Tables

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Table 1-1: Types of resistance .....</b>  | <b>64</b>  |
| <b>Table 3-1: List of concessions in Qajar period .....</b>                              | <b>98</b>  |
| <b>Table 3-2: Composition of foreign trade in 1909.....</b>                              | <b>110</b> |
| <b>Table 3-3: Agricultural production in total domestic production (%).....</b>          | <b>119</b> |
| <b>Table 3-4: The population of the city of Tehran, region of Tehran, and Iran.....</b>  | <b>139</b> |
| <b>Table 4-1: The number of wage labourers.....</b>                                      | <b>144</b> |
| <b>Table 4-2: Private and Public capital in Industry (Million toman).....</b>            | <b>148</b> |
| <b>Table 4-3: The Dispossessed Foundation assets after the revolution.....</b>           | <b>150</b> |
| <b>Table 4-4: Confiscated factories.....</b>   | <b>151</b> |
| <b>Table 4-5: Foreign investment (\$M toman).....</b>                                    | <b>152</b> |
| <b>Table 4-6: Housing conditions in Tehran 1976 (1000 people).....</b>                   | <b>154</b> |
| <b>Table 4-7: Urban Lands Laws.....</b>  | <b>159</b> |
| <b>Table 4-8: Housing conditions in Tehran in 1976 and 1986 (1000 people).....</b>       | <b>160</b> |
| <b>Table 4-9: Type of Housing tenure in 1976 and 1986.....</b>                           | <b>161</b> |
| <b>Table 4-10: Number of constructed residential dwellings between 1976 to 1986.....</b> | <b>163</b> |
| <b>Table 4-11: Housing Foundation activities between 1979-1988.....</b>                  | <b>164</b> |
| <b>Table 4-12: Transformation of residential space in Tehran (1976-1986).....</b>        | <b>166</b> |
| <b>Table 4-13-The share of housing investment (1976-1986).....</b>                       | <b>168</b> |
| <b>Table 4-14: The conditions of Tehran's districts.....</b>                             | <b>170</b> |
| <b>Table 5-1: First Development Plan (billions rials, constant 1989 prices) .....</b>    | <b>212</b> |
| <b>Table 5-2: Tehran City Hall budgets .....</b>   | <b>221</b> |
| <b>Table 5-3: Tehran City Hall Record.....</b>   | <b>228</b> |
| <b>Table 5-4: Traffic volume in the Old Navab Street and the New Highway .....</b>       | <b>237</b> |



## List of Figures

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Figure 3-1: Land price in 1959 and 1971.....</b>  | <b>129</b> |
| <b>Figure 3-2: The expansion of Tehran.....</b>  | <b>130</b> |
| <b>Figure 3-3: The transformation of urban settlements within region of Tehran.....</b>        | <b>167</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-1: Expansion of Tehran.....</b>  | <b>167</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-2: Housing quality in 1980.....</b>  | <b>171</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-3: Housing quality in 1986.....</b>  | <b>172</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-4: Neither East, nor West, just Islamic Republic.....</b>                          | <b>174</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-5: Islamic Flags.....</b>  | <b>175</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-6: The map of Tehran created in 1854.....</b>                                      | <b>177</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-7: Public execution in a city square .....</b>                                     | <b>179</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-8: Graffiti on a wall of a Tehran street portraying America as Big Satan .....</b> | <b>180</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-9: An aristocratic family's housing .....</b>                                      | <b>185</b> |
| <b>Figure: 4-10: Islamic gratifies.....</b>  | <b>190</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-11- Squatters of Tehran in 1980s .....</b>   | <b>196</b> |
| <b>Figure 4-12: Tehran and surrounding villages in 1976 and 1986 .....</b>                     | <b>199</b> |
| <b>Figure 5-1: Schematic plan of Navab Highway.....</b>  | <b>232</b> |
| <b>Figure 5-2: Navab Highway .....</b>   | <b>234</b> |
| <b>Figures 5-3: Aerial photo of Navab Highway before and after construction.....</b>           | <b>236</b> |
| <b>Figure 5-4: Aerial photo of Navab Highway before and after construction.....</b>            | <b>237</b> |
| <b>Figure 5-5: Navab Highway intersections .....</b>   | <b>238</b> |

## **Introduction:**

I clearly remember as a child growing up in Tehran, my three brothers and I used to play football and ride bicycles with our neighbours in the streets near to our home every single afternoon. It was the end of the Iran-Iraq war, in the late 1980s. Having a common enemy behind our national borders, the gap between the state and its people had been bridged, making nation-state as one and the same. In those days, I felt I actually owned public spaces. Our parents, too, felt quite comfortable to leave us in the streets playing with other neighbours' children whom they knew very well. In other words, a neighbourhood was an extended family and its surrounding space including its streets, shops, parks, etc. was a community. Twenty years later, when I went back to the same neighbourhood everything had changed. The street that I used to play football in had been widened. Alongside the main streets, two-storey residential houses were replaced by fancy shopping centres and commercial complexes. You could barely see children playing in the streets. More than people, there were cars and motorcycles filling the streets. The biggest change occurred in the collective consciousness of Tehranis; the new meaning of the streets had replaced the old one. Streets were no longer seen as safe and secure places for youngsters. Parents preferred to send their children to a nearby private sports club than to let them play in the streets. Apparently, the honeymoon of nation-state was over and new cracks began to emerge. Hence was the rise of old binaries: nation/state – public space/private space – use value/exchange value.

These tremendous transformations of the functions and meaning of streets coupled with the change in the physical appearance of Tehran are the reasons why I began this research. I wanted to know how a city could undergo this massive transformation and what the mechanisms of this change were. Having had these questions in mind, I came across Lefebvre's work when I was

doing my MA in sociology. Among other scholars who are engaged in the urban problematic, Lefebvre was the one who had more convincing answers to my questions. Lefebvre's writing covers quite a broad range of issues from political and economic aspects of the urban to philosophy, everyday life, state intervention, art, phenomenology, and so on. This thorough approach, partly empowered by his Hegelian roots, encouraged me to explore Tehran from diverse angles. Moreover, this multi-dimensional analysis of the urban helped me not to be trapped into single factor models that reduce the plurality of the urban phenomenon to a single underlying element. This multi-dimensional analysis distinguishes a Lefebvrian's view from the ecological approach of the Chicago School where the social patterns and behaviours are determined by size, density and heterogeneity of the city (Roy, 2011: 8). Also, Lefebvre's approach enabled me to go beyond structural analysis of Castells who considers the urban as a mere expression of the social structure in which the spatial units were defined according to the dominant instance, characteristic of the mode of production politico-juridical in feudalism, economics in capitalism (Castells, 1977:235). Rather than being a closed system, the urban is seen as a process in a Lefebvrian view. Accordingly, an analytical study needs to recognise the continuous tension between varied forces within the urban. Through the Lefebvrian approach, therefore, the transformation of the urban is attributed to the dialectical relations of immanent forces. This conception assists us to take into consideration both the dynamic and static of the urban simultaneously.

Another feature of Lefebvre's analysis was its power to go beyond the agent-structure binary. As a student who did his Master's degree in sociology, I was familiar with the limits of classical sociological approaches that argue for the primacy of either structure or agent. Lefebvre's dialectical interpretation gave me the opportunity to reconcile these two levels. This is partly

due to his dialectical logic which seeks to refuse the either/or mode of thinking. This dialectical view, furthermore, stands against the cause-effect arguments in which the magic of causality stands for explaining the transformation of the urban. Unlike a causal reasoning, a dialectical approach is capable of keeping alive tensions of urban phenomena. In other words, dialectical logic gives rise to an open-ended analysis paving the way for the emergence of the possible.

This study, however, is not a simple attempt to elaborate and explain the theory and ideas of Henri Lefebvre. It is, moreover, an endeavour to understand that if Lefebvre was born in other geographies, Tehran in this study, what kinds of revision and modification he would have done to his well-known study of *The production of space*. In this sense, the current research seeks to at once apply and transform the underlying logic of production of space.

It would not be wrong if we claim that one of the most important achievements of Lefebvre in regard to his work on cities was to raise the concept and reality of space to the rank of an ontological entity to be considered as a universal abstraction. This notion demands further explanation. Historically, every branch of knowledge was able to constitute a distinct discipline only if it was capable of gathering certain theories and concepts evolving around a unique theoretical object of study. Against this background, various Marxist dominant approaches, from Lenin and Gramsci to Lukacs and Frankfurt school, put different subjects, from political and economic processes to culture, ideology and consciousness, at the centre of their examinations. It was, implicitly or explicitly, believed that urbanisation is the excrescence of the circulation of capital (Smith, 2003: xvii) and that the urban can only act as a superstructure in the whole society. In contrast to this rather varied department of Marxism, Lefebvre made the urban problematic as his point of departure arguing that from this point on the urban problematic becomes a global phenomenon. It can no longer “be defined as a ‘superstructure’

on the surface of the economic structure... Urban reality modifies the relations of production without being sufficient to transform them. It becomes a productive force, like science. Space and the politics of space ‘express’ social relationships but react against them” (2003: 15).

Bringing the discontinuity between the industrial and the urban to the fore, Lefebvre emphasised the determinacy of the urban for the modern epoch. Drawing on Marx’s historical materialism, Lefebvre believes that by the domination of the urban other elements of society are subjected to its requirements. This idea demands a shift in the epistemology. It is no longer the industrial but the urban, with all its manifestations from everyday life and festivities to planning and architecture, in the form of representation and practice that constitutes the episteme. “[w]e can say that the urban ... rises above the horizon, slowly occupies an epistemological field, and becomes the episteme of an epoch... The urban begins its ascendance” (Lefebvre, 2003: 191).

Against this background, I examine Tehran as a sample that can reveal the main processes, practices, and discourses of the Iranian society. This ontological shift in the urban studies reminds us what Manuel Castells holds:

“[O]ne may clearly regard the whole of France as the Paris hinterland and find the key to the arrangement of the territory in the internal processes of the Paris network (Castells, 1977: 29).

This structural approach, however, runs the risk of systematisation, that is, to consider the urban as a closed system. Systematisation, however, forgets that there are always fissures and cracks in the urban phenomena which in turn set the conditions of the possibility for further transformations. In contrast to Castells’ structural approach, this research does not treat Tehran as a finished book. While keeping hold of the idea of totality, this research generates its own residue to be investigated by later researches.

When I began my study, it was supposed to explore merely the production of space of Tehran after the revolution. As I went further, I became aware that without taking into account the conditions of pre-revolutionary Tehran it is not possible to understand the nature of the transformation of post-revolutionary Tehran. In fact, to represent the form, function, and structure of Tehran before the revolution proved to be an essential part of the study. Therefore, this study covered three periods of transformation; pre-revolutionary Tehran, post-revolutionary Tehran, and finally the neoliberal turn of Tehran.

This periodisation of Tehran transformation is based on the constitutive elements of each period. These constitutive elements include political economy, Islamification, and space of resistance. There is a notion here that needs further clarification. To find the reason why these elements are considered as constitutive moments of the production of Tehran we have to refer to Lefebvre's theoretical view. Lefebvre believes that the urban is the centre of intersection of diverse forces from different levels. So, we have global forces, on the one hand, and everyday life which is called the private level in Lefebvre's language, on the other hand. For Lefebvre, Paris was the plane of manifestation of interpenetration of global forces and private forces. Paris, however, was not a simple container of these forces. On the contrary, it interacted and conditioned them too. Taking Tehran into consideration, we have to modify Lefebvre's theory so that it is able to incorporate the differences between Paris and Tehran. Paris, as one of the prominent capitals of the West, is actually the centre of generating global forces, whereas Tehran, as a peripheral node of the global system, is penetrated by them. In essence, Iran's 1979 revolution must be seen as a reaction of the periphery to the centre. In this sense, moreover, the global and private and national forces must be taken into consideration. This is the place that Tehran contributes to Lefebvre's theory. If the economy, in both forms of practices and

discourses, represents the key elements of the global forces and resistant actions of dwellers represent the transformative aspect of everyday life, the ideology of Islam represents the reaction of a peripheral state to a dominant world power on a national level.

To sum up, in this research we deal with three constitutive elements (economic processes, Islamification, and resistance) from three levels (global, national, and private) in three periods (pre-revolutionary, post-revolutionary, neoliberal). It seeks to enclose the transformation of Tehran through dialectical relationships of the abovementioned elements. Through these dialectical interactions, it is hoped that the totality of Tehran is represented. However, this study in no way claims to be an exhaustive examination. As mentioned before, every single study has its own residue to be explore by the next researchers.

### **Questions of the research**

This study is an epochal reading of Tehran in which each period is distinguished by its constitutive elements. Apart from theoretical framework and methodology in which I have sought to get theoretically involved with the urban theory of Lefebvre and presenting a Marxian methodology the empirical chapters of this thesis are ordered based on the three abovementioned epochs. In this sense, each chapter put its effort to answer a specific question. Although these questions themselves are divided into sub-questions, here I merely propose the main question of each empirical chapter and leave those sub-questions to be elaborated in their relevant chapters. Here are three main questions of the research:

- 1- How did the incorporation of Tehran into the world system transform the meaning of the urban and its practices and what was the implication of this new condition on the pre-revolutionary Tehran?

- 2- How were the forces of the production of Tehran subordinated to the requirements of Islamification during revolutionary epoch?
- 3- How did neoliberalism change the process of production of space in the second decade of the revolution by negating while preserving Islamic ideology?

Therefore, the empirical chapters try to elaborate on these questions. Needless to say, the way I chose to approach these questions goes through a Lefebvrian lens. I believe that Lefebvre enables me to examine these issues more sophisticated and more in-depth.



# Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

## **1-1- Theoretical framework**

### **1-1-1-Literature Review: Theses on Tehran**

It has been always under question that to some extent theories and concepts representing the complexity of Western countries and hence conceptualising the tradition of the West can be relevant to Eastern countries. Regardless of the historical and social variations between the two, it used to be Western categories as a hegemonic episteme projected onto the East to give it meaning and make it readable. Here, I do not intend to get involved in a discussion as to whether there is an inherent differentiation between the West and East or, as Chibber (2013:13) claims, they are simply “variations of the same basic form”. On this topic, we have rich literature within postcolonial schools that has scrutinised the relationship between the West and East over the past 30 years or so (Said, 1979; Spivak, 1988; Chakrabarty, 2000).

This section begins with an assumption that to apply Western theories to represent social, cultural, and economic conditions of Iran without considering its peculiarity would lead us to a wrong comprehension. Thus, here I shall review the efforts of Iranian scholars that attempt to elaborate on the specification of the conditions of Iran. Normally, it is assumed that an academic research gets critically engaged with the international Anglophonic debate on the topic in question. However, the lack of sufficient discussions on Iran in general and Tehran in particular within urban studies, does not allow us to do so. That is the reason why I decided to have a separate section about theses on Tehran. The aim is to introduce to English-speaking readers a range of theories that seek to conceptualise the conditions of Iran from different angles. What these theses have in common is the presupposition of inherent differences between Iran and the West on which base is founded new theories and concepts. It should be noted that none of these

theories emerge in a vacuum as if they have grown despite Western ways of thought. Quite the contrary, they begin with Western categories and then carry on by exposing the divergence engendered by the particular conditions of Iran. My work, therefore, follows the same line of logic founded on the Lefebvrian point of view. Bringing to the fore the singularity of Tehran, then, it attempts to transcend Lefebvre's theory to the next level. So, it is vital to remember that the theses on Tehran, including my own work, are not isolated theories delinked from Western episteme. Borrowing terms and the language of the West, they try not to confine within their borders seeking to go beyond that.

Having said that, in what follows I have summarised four theories about Tehran seeking to conceptualise social, cultural, and economic peculiarities of Iran. It also aims to show the extent to which these theses diverge from their Western counterparts. Among the following four theories, two of them went through historical roots of structuring of Iranian society and the two remaining ones looked upon contemporary construction of Iran. Each of these theories, however, has a specific centre of concentration from political and urban to economic and geopolitical arguments. The first theory, arbitrary state, gives a historical background of the way in which political condition has given Iran a diverse condition which is not comparable with those of European countries. The city of force, a theory proposed by Parviz Piran, focuses on the historical structuring of Iranian city founded on geopolitical characteristics. Rentier state, the third theory, draws on the effect of the discovery and nationalisation of oil industry on the formation of Iranian state along with its organic class. Finally, Tehran as paradox city theorises by Asef Bayat discusses the dialectical nature of post-revolutionary Tehran. He emphasises on the conflicting elements as constitutive parts of Tehran after the Islamic Revolution. Reviewing these theories, I aim at showing the inadequacy of the Western theories in order to

represent the peculiarity of Iranian condition. It proves the need for creating new categories to overcome the shortcomings of the well-established Western concepts.

#### **1-1-1-1- First theory: Arbitrary State**

The nature of the state and its relations to the sociospatial processes is a much debate and controversial topic. From Marx's conception of the state as "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels, 1998:37) to Poulantzas' theory of 'relative autonomy' of state (Poulantzas, 1973), critical thought was engaged in theorising the role of the state within social configuration. Since the 1970s onward, this controversy over the state has stretched into the theory of space. From Castells' theory of 'collective consumption' (Castells, 1977) and Lefebvre's 'state mode of production' (1991, 2009) to Harvey's entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1985, 1989a, 1989b), and Saunders' 'autonomous state' (Saunders, 1981) urban theorists have endeavoured to map the trace of state apparatus within spatial configuration. This simply reveals that spatial theories have to take into account functions of the state if they are to represent a comprehensive understanding of urban processes. The role of the state becomes indispensable when it comes to Iran. There have been partial efforts to address the geographies of the state such as Wittfogel's 'oriental despotism' (1957) and Marx's 'Asiatic mode of production' (1971).

However, Homa Katouzian believes that none of these former theories has properly grasped the nature of Iranian state and its relation to the urban problematic. Calling into question the Western conception of the state, he describes Iranian government as the 'arbitrary state'. It highlights the superior position of the state as standing above the law and interprets it as it wishes (Katouzian, 1997). Unlike the context of Iran, Katouzian contends, the history of

Western countries shows that there has always been law limiting the will and act of government. Even in periods of revolts, the aim of rebellions has been to revise or change the old law with the new one and not merely overthrowing the heads of government. Conversely, Iran has suffered from the state with no limiting boundaries (Katouzian, 1997).

In order to discover the condition of emergence of this type of state, Katouzian refers to the history of the state of Iran where the rights of property ownership of land had exclusively been in the hands of the government. Therefore, there were only privileges which the government granted to individuals (and some clans and communities), and therefore they could be withdrawn at any time (Katouzian, 1997: 53). This was due to the monopoly of property rights in the hands of the state and the concentration of military and bureaucratic power under control of Shah himself. Therefore, proprietors could never truly own their properties (land) and they could not be inherited.

It must be emphasised, however, that these social relations which were dominant particularly in rural areas did not necessarily work in a same manner in urban areas. As it is explained in theoretical chapter, urban lands were, and still is, the concentration of varied social forces exerted from different scales. Therefore, it would be a partial understanding if one assumes that the exact social relations of rural time-space are applied on the terrain of urban lands.

The most important consequence of this condition, Katouzian believes, is to constrain the creation of social classes and to forge a distinctively different relationship between classes and the state. Obviously one can talk about social classes in Iran, but, their relationships *vis-à-vis* the state are fundamentally different from Western counterparts. “[I]n Europe it was the social classes which were functional; in Iran it was the state which was functional, while the social classes were empirical” (1997: 54). This was partly due to the tribal root of the Iranian ruling

class where was the medium of incessant rivalry between different tribes to seize the power. Unlike the social structure of serfdom with its politico-juridical system, these tribes were highly dependent on the power of their warriors to topple down the central government.

What this historical condition implies is that despite the existence of social stratification within Iranian society, the state has been independent from them and has existed without representing any social classes. Therefore, it is reasonable to claim that in contrast to the articulation of the Western history as the history of class struggles (Marx, 1998:31) the history of Iran is the history of the tribal struggles. This tribal root of the states, means that prior to the creation of the modern state, the power was founded on warfare spirit and militancy rather than class domination.

Accordingly, the nature of legitimacy of property ownership was traditionally founded on the superiority of militant power; who won the battle owned the ground. With some modification, this sense of ownership has survived into the current time. The modern Iranian state, whether in the form of monarchy or Islamic, seeks to control and tame every single corners of its territory. This notion of ownership in the relation between the state and social forces is crucial for my research if we are to understand the process of production of modern Tehran.

#### **1-1-1-2- Second theory: The city of force**

Along with Katouzian's theory of arbitrary state, Parviz Piran, another Iranian scholar, has looked for geopolitical conditions of Iran to elaborate on the relation between the state and city. He goes much further back in history to discover the causes of separation between the state and sociospatial groups such as tribesmen, rural dwellers, and urban inhabitants. Following his comparative study, Piran (1997) refers to the citizenship-based city (Athenian-Roman city) in which the concept of citizenship was first came into exist. Unlike Athenian context, Piran

claims, the notion and reality of citizenship never came into exist within Iranian cities (1997: 15). He believes the reason lies in the particular geographical characteristics of Iranian society. Piran touches upon two elements to explain this geographical configuration. The first is that Iran has always suffered from a dry climate and periodic drought. This condition led to the establishment of both diffused villages and nomadic tribes. The second is the geopolitical importance of Iran as a main route which connects west to east e.g. the silk route through which merchants import and export products from west to east or vice versa (Piran, 1997: 18). These two historical features had made Iranian cities highly vulnerable. First, because villages were usually under attack by nomadic tribes in periods of drought. Secondly, because there were outlaws sporadically attacked caravans and stole their products. Over the centuries, this insecurity had become part of Iranian social structure to the extent that in the historical texts of Iranian literature we can find particular concepts such as *ilghar* and *chappo* for describing this condition. *Ilghar* literally means raid and refers to the raids of nomadic tribes on townsmen in order to submit them to their own authority. *Chappo*, also, means plundering and uses when a tribe invades a sedentary society in order to plunder it. Interestingly enough, *ilghar* and *chappo* connote positive meanings and carry affirmative values in the context of the relation between diverse sociospatial forces of Iranian society. As the result, Iranian cities had severely suffered from lack of security and so they had been looking for a way to establish safety and security in their daily activity (Piran, 1997: 19).

This condition paved the way for the advent of a government whose immediate duty was to provide security and safety for dwellers within its realm. So, the legitimacy of the government was based on its function to guarantee the security. To accomplish this goal the government did not hesitate to use any sort of coercive power. Interestingly, individuals had consented to and

accepted the authority of government despite its suppressive and violent method. Hence, Piran adds, a collective mentality was gradually shaped among Iranian individuals that entailed a conscious selection of autocracy (Piran, 2005). This trend eventually led to the production and reproduction of autocratic governments and dictator subjects.

While Katouzian's argument is evolved within discipline of politics in general and state theory in particular, Piran begins with geopolitical factors in order to clarify the process of construction of a specific mode of city that he calls 'the city of force' (Piran, 2005: 54). In contrast to the city of force which was a foci of manifestation of autocratic governments, he adds, the Athenian-Roman city, Polis, was a locus of social gathering and making collective decision (Castoriadis, 2004, in Etemad, 2005). Hence, the separation between public and private space that represents citizenship-based cities cannot be applied to the city of force that is under incessant surveillance and often suppression by despotic states. Piran proposes to replace the Western well-established binary of public-private space with a new one which is more relevant to Iranian context. Using Piran's term, we have a secure space which denotes the space of home and family, on the one hand, and unsecure space that represents the space of street and anonymity, on the other hand. He conclude that as the result of prevalence of unsecure spaces the formation of a sense of belonging to the city failed (Piran, 2005: 57). This matter resulted in the shift in the meaning of the concept of citizenship. While the concept of citizenship implies a civic bond among the people of a certain geographical territory, in Iran it was tribal bond that tied people together. Therefore, civic relationship, Piran suggests, must be replaced by blood and tribal bond as an underlying element of Iranian identity. Therefore, the subject of the city of force, Piran asserts, exhibits non-citizenship without urban identity who have always been looking for a just and fair *Sultan* to rule over the city by means of justice (Piran, 1997).



This conception of Iranian cities, take a crucial part in my understanding of the process of production of space in Tehran. Conceptualising the relation between the state and the urban, it is vital not to the trap of applying Western binary of public-private space. In the following section, I introduces *Arbab- Ra'yaat* space as a substitution to the public-private space. It is argued that streets of Tehran, rather than being conceived as the public space of citizens to congregate and to make decisions, in other words, rather than being politicised, was the place of displaying the authority of the Shah. The more power the Shah gained, the more control he exerted across its territory. Contrary to Agora, the centre of political life, the main squares of the Iranian cities, were the place of displaying the coercive force of the Shah

#### **1-1-1-3- Arbab-Ra'yaat space**

Arbab and Ra'yaat are the terms come from the history of pre-modern Iran. Historically, when agriculture was the dominant mode of production, like feudalism in European countries, a specific social relation was at work. It consisted of Arbab, as the owner of land, on the one hand, and Ra'yaat, landless peasant, on the other hand. What ruled over this social formation was mostly traditions and customs. With all geographical differentiation, there was a commonality determining the relations between Arbab and Ra'yaat. Similar to the serfdom in Europe, it was extra-economic coercion that specified these relations. Accordingly, Arbab not only owned the property but also the product of the land belonged to him. Being considered as a part of Arbab property, Ra'yaat had to work on Arbab's land and merely took a small share of the final products to survive. This part of Iranian history is quite similar to its Western counterpart. But, when it comes to cites the story becomes different. Until 20<sup>th</sup> century, Iranian cities were named after the king who ruled over his territory. Tehran, for instance, was called *Dar al-caliphate of Naseri* which literally means the home of king Naser. In fact, cities were

considered as extension to the King's property just as manorial was to a lord. In other words, social relations of Iran's feudalism, could survive all along centuries and extended themselves right into the heart of 19<sup>th</sup>-century cities.

Against this background, a binary of home-street has been constructed through which certain relations between city dwellers and space constituted. Iranian city dwellers took home as a space of peace and relief, whereas, streets were seen as the loci of exertion of King's power. Therefore, spaces outside homes were the practical terrain of power performances through which the idea of city as a king's property was materialised.

Against this historical condition, one must be cautious in applying Western categories on the non-West. Referring to the idea of public-private space, the differences and similarities must be touched upon. Historically, the idea of public space:

“lay at the centre of the polis - the city-state- in which the ideal of a democratic polity constructed around citizenship prevailed. And despite the glaring failings of the Athenian polis in Socrates' and Plato's day - where less than half the population actively participated in political life - its *agora* did at least provide the forum for debate and communication and so helped pioneer the principle of democratic citizenship” (Merrifield, 1996:57-59).

As it is clear, there is a constitutive difference between the idea of public space and the idea of Dar al-Caliphate. While the former ideally denotes the sphere of democratic practices, the later symbolises the manifestation of will of the power. There is, however, another complexity at work when we are dealing with modern cities of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Here, I do not intend to get involve in a theoretical discussion on the nature of Iranian modernity since it is dealt with in next chapters. It would be sufficed to mention that cities of our time is not only the product of their

previous history but also of their current geography. In other words, Tehran, for instance, is as much influenced by its past history as it is affected by remote contemporary geographies of the West. So, streets of Tehran have been a product of complexity of Western public space and Iranian Dar al-Caliphate. To highlight this complexity, in this thesis I would rather to use Arbab-Ra'yaat space than public-private space.

#### **1-1-1-4- Third theory: Rentier state**

Dealing with the interaction between the state and society, the last two theories concentrate on the significance of political forces in constructing the city. In his theory, Mahdavy, seeks to look at implication of political-economic variations on the configuration of Iranian cities. Drawing on the political economy of oil-based countries, Mahdavy unfolds the economic processes through which the society is constructed.

Historically, the theory of rentier state has been articulated after injection of oil revenues into the Iranian economy, particularly after the nationalisation of the oil industry in 1950s. in his research, Mahdavy observed the emergence of a series of similar set-ups in countries that receive on a regular basis substantial amounts of external economic rent (Mahdavy, 1970:428). These governments takes a main role in the production and distribution of wealth within society. In this respect, four features have been distinguished as essential characters of a rentier state:

- 1- Predomination of rentier situation in economy
- 2- External origin of sources of rent
- 3- Only a few are engaged in generation of rent
- 4- The role of government as a principal recipient of external rent (Beblawi, 1987)

Following the increase of oil prices in the 1960s and 1970s, Iran's economy became dependent on oil revenue. This trend liberated the government from extracting income from the domestic economy, in particular taxation. Furthermore, this windfall income was mostly spent on government expenditure rather than being invested in infrastructure. As the result of this condition we can witness a decline in investment in domestic projects, in particular agricultural ones. Accordingly, in the years between 1960 and 1980 the economic growth was significantly reduced (Razaghi, 2013:69).

Mahdavy concludes that this new economic condition in which government became both rich and independent from domestic income had unpleasant micro- and macro-consequences on Iranian society. He traces the effect of rentier state on two levels; the level of subjectivity and the level of economic structure. The new subjectivity emerges out of what he calls rentier mentality. In the rentier state the welfare and prosperity imported from abroad pre-empts some of the urgency for change and rapid growth and may in fact coincide with socio-political stagnation and inertia (Mahdavy, 1970: 437). Furthermore, this phenomenon has a seminal effect on the ethics of work and productivity. Contracts, which are supposed to be made according to one's competency, are given as a reward for expressing gratitude. In addition, the opportunity of finding a job is highly bound up with who you know rather than what you know. "civil servants see their principal duty as being available in their offices during working hours; businessmen abandon industry and enter into real estate speculation or other special situations associated with a booming oil sector; the best and brightest abandon business and seek out lucrative government employment" (Yate, 1996:22).

From a macro perspective, rentier society is characterised by statism and rentier class. Statism denotes the position in which government becomes independent from taxation or any other

domestic source because of windfall income extracted from external sources. Accomplishment of unionisation of labour becomes difficult because in a rentier state the rational correlation between work and reward is ignored. This gets worse by the fact that there exists monopolisation of employment in a rentier system. As Luciani remarks “the small number of hands employed in the oil business makes it possible essentially to buy off the possibility of unions developing in these sectors” (Luciani, 1987).

Additionally, a rentier state often makes a suitable context for growth of a rentier group whose existence relies on its link to the network of generation and distribution of oil revenues. Detached from history and social background, this emergent group only comes to exist after a boom in oil revenues. As the result, this rentier group does not merit to be labelled as a class since the condition of its emergence disconnected from the process of production roots in an uneven distribution of a national wealth. So, this nouveau riche does not represent any social strata of the society. Politically speaking, they are conservative and reluctant to social reform and democratic changes. In the broader sense, a rentier state changes the configuration of economic structure leading to an independent state whose main base of reliance is the windfall oil revenues.

The rentier state theory, however, has its own blind spot. The main drawback of this theory is its ignorance about the fact that the economic structuring of a rentier society is not merely the product of a national state who owes natural resources. Moreover, it is an effect of global forces and their complicity to the production and reproduction of this sort of economic structure. In McJihad, Mitchell gives a quite comprehensive picture of the interconnectedness of national politics and international companies in constructing a novel politics in Saudi Arabia as an oil-based country (Mitchell, 2011).

Despite its weakness, rentier state theory sheds light on an important aspect of the new national politics. It shows how the structuring of the state in a country with natural resources is different from those who, like most European countries, are highly dependent on the taxes. Although theories of arbitrary state and the city of force attempt to reveal this particularity of Iranian state by touching upon political and geopolitical factors respectively, theory of rentier state does the same through emphasising on political economic factors.

#### **1-1-1-5- Forth Theory: The City of Paradox**

In his article, *Tehran: Paradox city*, Bayat gives an alternative reading from Tehran. Shifting away from single factor analysis, which is the drawback of all three abovementioned theories, Bayat's discussion is empowered by dialectical mode of understanding. Concentrating on the post-revolutionary Tehran, he accentuates the conflicting forces and contradiction within the urban. These opposing forces, in Bayat's view, account for the constitutive thrust of the production of Tehran after the revolution. Hence, is the reception of Tehran as a paradox city.

Bayat traces these paradoxical tendencies via their manifestation within diverse spheres of urban life, from architecture and public spaces to urban policies and economic processes. In so doing, he goes back to the previous regime where the seed of this paradoxical situation began to grow.

In the early 1920s when Reza Shah came to power, he advocated the process of modernisation one of which archetypes was modern urban planning. Having visited Turkey, in the reign of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, he thought the leading reason for Turkey's development was to give up its traditions and follow Western reforms. Consequently, Reza Shah began tracking modern and Western policies without any concern for Iranian customs and traditions. Mohammad Reza

Shah, the son of Reza Shah, also continued the process of modernisation until the Islamic revolution. In this regard, Bayat deduces, the Islamic Revolution was a reaction to the above-forcing modernisation in which bases of traditional structures had been undermined (Bayat, 2010).

Subsequently, the new revolutionary regime aimed to restore the traditional bases in general and Islamic roots of the society in particular that were intended to be cleansed by the previous secular regime. Meanwhile, the process of modernisation of the old regime had been institutionalised giving rise to a modern new middle who followed modern ideas and values such as freedom, human rights, justice and so on. It is crucial to mention that at the core of Bayat's conception is a dialectical, in contrast to antagonistic, appreciation of this binary. I do not intend to get theoretically involved on this subject since it is elaborated in more detail in the next sections. Here, it would be sufficed to highlight that while an antagonistic binary makes the removal of either side necessary, a dialectical one, which is also an underlying logic of my own perception throughout this thesis, posits a generative interaction by means of negation.

As the result, in Bayat's view, the history of post-revolutionary Tehran is driven by two conflicting tendencies derived from traditionalism and modernism. In what follows, he seeks to trace the roots and manifestation of these forces.

#### 1- Old authority Vs. new authority:

The modern history of Iran is filled with the unceasing conflict between the old authority, which was based on a trinity of *Olamas*<sup>1</sup>, *Bazaargan*<sup>2</sup>, and *Arbab*<sup>3</sup>, and a new authority which was

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<sup>1</sup> - Muslim religious leaders

<sup>2</sup> - Influential tradesmen who were centred on the traditional market; *Bazaar*

<sup>3</sup> - Influential feudal leaders

founded on bureaucratic rationalism and scientism (Bayat, 2010). While the reign of Pahlavi can be seen as of a period of a structural replacing the former with the later, the Islamic Revolution should be considered as a return to the old order while keeping the fruits of the new one. This means nothing less than a try to reconcile the two. Needless to say that this reconciliation has been, and still has, its own victims from both fronts.

## 2- Freedom Vs. suppression:

One of the main theme in revolutionary slogans before the Islamic Revolution was the cry for freedom. Furthermore, during the first year after the revolution, social solidarity united every group and class with various ideologies resulting in a collective participation to build a new, independent, and free Iran. After this period of relative freedom and collective participation, however, a new interpretation of Islam became dominant and began suppressing diverse ideas and views. Owing to the extensive belief in the value of freedom, this type of fundamentalism was not fully able to repress others in the name of Islamification alone. This necessitates the creation of a concept that keeps at once the value of Islam and freedom. Hence was the prevalence of 'Islamic freedom'. The emergence of Islamic freedom, however, did not resolve the tension between its two segments. As the result, there has been, and still is, a continuous clash between suppression and freedom tendencies within Tehran.

## 3- Populism Vs. neoliberalism:

Economically, there have been two contradictory policies since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution. There were defenders of social justice, on the one hand, and advocates of free market on the other hand. Each period of post-revolutionary Iran has witnessed the primacy of one of these tendencies. Initially, the Revolution had defined its economic outlook as an opposition to the uneven distribution of wealth prevailed throughout the old regime. As the



result, the 1980s resulted in a relative degree of class egalitarianism. “Many of the pre-revolutionary poor and marginalized were now more closely integrated into the social and spatial structure of the city” (Bayat, 2010: 107). According to a report, whereas 53% of Tehranis were homeowner before the Islamic Revolution, the number rose to 62% by 1982 (AIEC, 1985 in Bayat, 2010). Moreover, there has been a strong tendency to dominate the market by allocating massive projects to the public sector, among them Sepah<sup>4</sup> (the administrative section of the security forces), and also by exclusive control of trade and introducing tariffs. The growth of pseudo-private companies<sup>5</sup> which benefit from their close relation to sources of power, has been one effect of this policy. This condition creates the best context for populist government, since it controls the market and can gain massive public support.

However, the free market policies of removing subsidies and tariffs have been undertaken in some periods after the revolution. The government followed these neo-liberal policies in the name of development, especially after the Iran-Iraq in 1989. It was also in this time that five-year development plans was introduced. As we will see in the next chapter, the structure of these plans was inspired by instructions of IMF and World Bank.

Against this background, the post-revolutionary Iran must be seen as a pendulum swinging between two conflicting poles of populism and neoliberalism.

#### 4- Capitalism and Islamification:

After the boom in oil revenues in the 1960s, Tehran became the centre of accumulation; industries, services and trade were centred in Tehran. Along with accumulation of capital, in

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<sup>4</sup> - Sepah is a specific security force whose main duty is to control riots and protests within Iran. In some cases, recently, it has been engaged in economic affairs as well. As a result, several projects from construction of refinery to road construction have been employing the services offered by Sepah.

<sup>5</sup> - they are pseud-private, since members of their board are mostly former members of Sepah or other public institutions.

which land was transformed into a commodity, Tehran became the locus for consumption (Bayat, 2010). This trend was intensified after the Iran-Iraq war and Khomeini's death when liberalism and the free market became the main policy of the state in the 1990s. Hence, several cafes and restaurants along with modern shopping centres were built. Subsequently, the appearance of modern capitalist cities became a pattern for Iranian urbanists. In opposition to this was the ideological revolutionary state in the first decade of the new regime. In these periods, Islamic ideology was advertised. This advertisement embodied itself through the streets and public spaces, as a consequence of which the appearance of the city was filled with Islamic signs and banners. Furthermore, the name of public squares and streets changed to those of martyrs who were killed in the Iran-Iraq war. The City Hall of Tehran, also, passed a bill regarding to burial of martyrs in main squares of Tehran to spread the revolutionary spirit all over the city. Thus, the history of post-revolutionary Iran was a scene of struggle between capitalism and Islamification which exemplified itself within the public space.

#### 5- Centre and periphery:

As previously mentioned, Tehran hosted a huge amount of immigrants who mostly migrated to Tehran from rural areas in order to find better jobs, higher prestige, and an improved quality of life. So, the population of Tehran increased seven times from 1956 to 1996, however, the population of Iran as a whole increased three times in the same period (Markaz Amar Iran, 2006). Additionally, Tehran's area became twice as big since its size was no longer sufficient for its new dwellers. This trend along with the severe effects of free market and commodification of land caused Tehran's growth. Consequently, the city of Tehran was confronted with a massive demand for housing. Meanwhile, due to Islamification and the nationalisation of industries after the revolution, many private land investors gave up their land

and capital and left Iran. Therefore, the number of houses constructed in 1982 was one tenth of those constructed in 1979. This fact thus produced several slums around Tehran which typically encompassed immigrants and poor individuals who accounted for 35% of Tehran's population (Bayat, 2010: 104). Interestingly, in the same period 75% of new buildings were not planned before being constructed. This meant that houses were not being built with any respect for the existing limits of Tehran and the city grew outside of its borders. Furthermore, owing to the period of liberalism within government, the gulf between the poor and the rich deepened and spatial segregation worsened. Because of this, the centre and the north of Tehran became places for the rich and areas on the periphery became hosts to the poor. In the following period, the centre was filled with beggars, hawkers, and prostitutes who mostly lived on the periphery and suffered from poverty. It should be emphasised that besides this spatial differentiation between the centre and the periphery, there was a cultural gap as well.

#### 6- Traditionalism and Modernism:

In the aftermath of the revolution, post-revolutionary authority was established. Along with Islamic ideology as a constitutive component of this new authority, the government tried to Islamise Iran. Hence, one could witness the growth of revolutionary institutions such as Council of Revolution, Islamic Republic Party, Courts of Revolution, Council of Cultural Revolution and so on. These institutions along with the security forces, namely Sepah and Basij attempted to spread the spirit of traditionalism throughout the society. In doing so, they began codifying Islamic rules such as Hijab<sup>6</sup>, gender segregation, and more recently the Act of Islamic Architecture. The new regime also began suppressing dissidents, intellectuals and students.

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<sup>6</sup> - Hijab is an Islamic way of dressing for women in which they must completely cover their hair in front of other individuals except their families.

Moreover, the government occasionally put police and security forces (Basij) on the streets in order to make sure that an individual's way of dressing was not against Islam.

However, there was, and still is, continuous resistance by citizens who are the main subject of modernism. They show their disagreement by transforming the Hijab into a fashionable item, having parties in their homes, watching satellite television and foreign channels, listening to Western music, writing anti-government slogans on the walls, launching campaigns, and conducting movements (the last movement, the so-called Green movement should be understood in this context).

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that Tehran, as the centre of a transitional country, has encompassed contradictory trends and traits. This fact manifests itself both in public spaces and private spaces, or as I intend to call them Arbab (master) and Ra'yaat (bondsmen) spaces. In the Arbab space, while the government tries to extend the spirit of Islam, individuals resist peacefully. This is exemplified by the women's rights movement, the 18th Tir protest in 1999, and the Green movement in 2009. Resistance also occurs within the Ra'yaat space, mainly when the Arbab spaces are severely suppressed. This manifests itself in the form of the daily and continuous disobeying of Islamic governmental rules through those ways of living which vividly oppose the one propagandised by the government.

### **1-1-2- On Lefebvre**

In this section I will attempt to elaborate on some of Lefebvre's ideas particularly those that comprise his spatial and urban theoretical constellation. In so doing, what is necessary is to begin with Lefebvre's philosophical foundation, specially his conception of dialectical logic upon which he built the theory of the production of space. Following this, I have initiated the theoretical framework with Lefebvre's dialectical logic. Reflection on Lefebvrian dialectic has a seminal importance for my research since my narrative of the production of Tehran is enhanced by Lefebvre's dialectic. Setting the context for theory of space, then, the theoretical section turns to Lefebvre's spatial theory concentrating on dialectical development of space. After dealing with historical progress of the city, the synchronic analysis of the urban comes to the fore. In this respect, two binaries, that is use value/exchange value and habiting/habitat will be at the centre of discussion. For, they take a crucial part in conceptualising space processes.

Dealing with spatial aspects of Lefebvre's thought would simply represent a partial view if one does not bring his political outlook into the account. Therefore, the next part allocates to his political thought and politics of space. The last part of this section belongs to a theoretical elaboration on the concept of power and its mutual constitutive concept of resistance. This is particularly important for my research because, as I will show in the next chapter, the space of resistance accounts for the third constitutive element of production of space in general and Tehran in particular.

Although Lefebvre's theories and concepts have acted as a theoretical lens through which the contemporary Tehran is reconstructed by my study, I have not merely applied his *already* existing theoretical constellation. As far as the current work concerns, I have sought to modify and ultimately transform Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. This task has been

followed in two directions. Theoretically, I have attempted to present a new interpretation of Lefebvre's theory; a more Hegelian one. This work has been carried out in this theoretical chapter. Furthermore, empirically, I have endeavoured to transform it by means of the particularity of Tehran. This latter task has been carried out in following chapters on Tehran transformation. Therefore, this research begins with Lefebvre, however, seeks to go beyond that.

### **1-1-2-1- Lefebvrian dialectical logic**

In order to grasp Lefebvre's complex theoretical thoughts we first need to take into account his philosophical background, particularly his appreciation and application of dialectical logic on which his theoretical constellation is founded. Although Lefebvre's idea of dialectics begins with Hegel and Marx, it does not stop at this point. Like other conceptions in his theory, Lefebvre critically confronts with Hegelian dialectics and transforms it. Apart from these two figures, namely Hegel and Marx, he also draws upon Nietzsche which endows his dialectics with a unique form that had apparent differences with prior ones. This combination, along with Lefebvre's innovation, makes his theory of dialectics difficult to be grasped insofar as its initial receptions in Anglo-American language have been met with severe critiques by the next generation (see Elden's critiques of Soja and Shields (Elden, 2004: 37) and Schmid's critiques of Harvey (Schmid, 2008: 41-43)).

Before elaborating upon Lefebvre's theory of dialectics, we should first take his critique of Western philosophy into consideration. There Lefebvre sharply rejects the traditional either/or dichotomy, be it Aristotle's excluded middle principle, or a Kant's a priori and a posteriori statement, or analytic and synthetic judgment (Elden, 2004:31). He believes that these binaries

lead to either a sort of formalism or dogmatism. Refusing the separation between form and content, logic and practice, abstract and concrete, and thought and existence, Lefebvre asserts that “formal logic, like grammar has only a relative scope and a limited application, so that a complimentary logic is needed, a concrete logic of which formal logic is an element within it. This is dialectical logic. Form and content are thus linked, but still different” (Lefebvre, 1947: 51-2, in Elden, 2004: 30). Drawing upon Hegel’s notion of dialectics, Lefebvre sees a conflictual relation between thought and reality that ‘is fought over and transcended’ (Elden, 2004: 30). So, no judgment is absolutely true or absolutely false. It is in this context that Lefebvre acknowledges the existence of the third term, that is a negation of the negation of the first term. The third term is not simply the opposite of the first two terms, but transcends the contradiction between them. Not only does it preserve the element of the former elements but also goes beyond them by enriching them. The third term denotes the emergence of a new condition that is different from the hitherto existing ones, both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. ‘It gives the formal logic a content and, at the same time, transcends it’ (Lefebvre, 1939: 30 in Elden 2004: 32). Therefore, instead of mere classification, which is the aim of an analytical rationality, dialectical logic deals with the process of becoming. This notion of becoming is of crucial importance for understanding Lefebvre’s spatial theory. I will return back to this dialectical logic when I am elaborating his historical analysis of the urban and his synchronic conceptualisation of space.

However, Lefebvre found Hegel’s dialectics insufficient since it ultimately leads to formalism. For Hegel saw History as the process of evolution of consciousness finally finding its ideal form in state. Pushing further the boundary of dialectical thought, Lefebvre criticises Hegel from two standpoints. First, he rejects all kinds of teleological understanding of history, whether it be

idealistic or materialistic. This finality functions to predetermine the end of history at the expense of the dissolution of the possible. On the contrary, Lefebvre says, “space (social, urban, economic, epistemological) is unable to provide form, meaning, or finality” (Lefebvre, 2003: 73). Bringing social perception of time as an example, Lefebvre attempts to open up a realm of possibility within history:

“Childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, which are deficient in reality, clumsy, pretentious, even stupid are incomparably rich with the greatest and most deceptive form of wealth: possibility.” (2003: 84)

In this respect, a new theory is called for which reinstates our “model” of the adult, destroys the myth of paternity, and dethrones maturity as an “end” (2003: 84). Thus, the idea of becoming is conceptualised in a way in which the possible stands against any sense of endpoint, namely finality, meaning, accomplishment, perfection, termination, conclusion. The same line of critique is also relevant to those exponents of orthodox Marxism who see that history goes through linear sequences and terminates at the classless human society.

Secondly, Lefebvre opposes Hegel’s idealism in which the everyday life of citizens has been completely grasped by thought. To consider the realm of daily activity as a mere projection of idea into world is to construct an exhaustive system which, in turn, leads to traditional formalism, to a sharp conflict between invention and knowledge, between fruitfulness and rigour (Lefebvre, 1939, in Elden, 2004: 33). Hegel’s philosophy, Lefebvre adds, becomes a finished system at the historical moment when “philosophy achieves itself”:

“The system has double sides, philosophical and political. Hegel discovers the historical moment of this shift from the rational into the real and vice versa. He brings to light identity at the moment when history produces it. Philosophy achieves itself.” (1996: 91)



The temptation to resolve the separation between reason and reality did not cease for subsequent dialecticians, but simply changed its face. In the upside down world of Marx the convergence of rationality and reality happens in another society by means of a mediatory role of the proletariat; in the society where bourgeoisie has been destroyed and philosophical speculation and systemisation have been abolished (Lefebvre, 1996: 91).

As I have already mentioned, Lefebvre criticised those dialectical thoughts that tend, in one way or another, to either finality or systemisation. Furthermore, he also differentiated his dialectics from previous ones by claiming that the third term is not the product of the conflictual relation of the first two. In Lefebvre's eyes, the world is under the incessant process of becoming resulting from the simultaneous (dialectical) relations between three terms. So, there is no temporal priority between these elements. This simultaneity is traceable in both Lefebvre's historical and synchronic analysis of space. Historically, he recognises nature, town, and countryside as the three elements of dialectical development of space through history. However, in the twentieth century in the aftermath of massive urbanisation, Lefebvre believes, relations between these elements reversed and they were replaced with three new ones, namely, rurality, urban fabric and centrality. Synchronically, Lefebvre's triad consists of spatial practice, representation of space, and space of representation. These are considered as the three moments of urban reality constructing space through their simultaneous dialectical relations. I will return to this historical and synchronic understanding of space in the next section. But here I would like to address the influence of Nietzsche on Lefebvre's dialectics.

There are at least two domains in which Nietzsche influenced Lefebvre's dialectics. First, the way Lefebvre portrays the development of history is highly reliant on the Nietzschean notion of non-linearity. It is this conception of historical progress that permits Lefebvre to claim the

simultaneity of the three moments of dialectics without privileging one over the others. As Elden puts it, Lefebvre's *depassement* stems more from Nietzsche's *überwinden* (overcome) than Hegelian and Marxist *aufheben* (to carry to another level) (Elden, 2004: 37). This also enables Lefebvre to break through orthodox Marxist teleological history and constitute a notion of history imbued with possibilities:

[Marxism] is not a system or dogma but a reference. Marxism is a method that on the one hand, depends upon a certain number of determined concepts but, on the other hand, is analytic and critical of a certain historical process of becoming. As a consequence of this movement, the real tends toward the possible while, at the same time, eliminating all other potentialities, though the possible also comes up against the impossible, discernible only in the course of practical action. This attitude implies a triadic analysis of movement and becoming: reality/possibility/impossibility. Moreover, there is a strategic objective: to change the world (Lefebvre 1988: 77, in Charnock, 2010)

Despite this recognition of the possible, Lefebvre's dialectics is also inspired by the Nietzschean idea of creation. In this regard, the process of becoming brought about by ceaseless dialectical interrelations of the three elements is more similar to a work of art rather than mere production of a material commodity. In that case, the role of lived experience and the assertion of life are crucial in this conceptualisation of creation. As is observable, Nietzschean praise of poetic characteristics of everyday life plays a key task in Lefebvre's view: "The human being cannot do anything but inhabit as a poet" (Lefebvre, 2003: 82).

Furthermore, using the term *oeuvre*, he applies the same view in his urban theory to explain the mediatory role of the city between the far and near order. We will return to this topic later. But, here I would like to mention that through this concept again we can recognise the dialectical

relation between three elements (far order, near order, and mediation) resulting in the creation of *oeuvre* as a work of art.

Having described the philosophical foundation of Lefebvre's dialectics, now we can begin to explore his spatial theory and historical development of the city.

### **1-1-2-2- Spatial turn**

During the period between the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s Lefebvre's works shifted to the urban problematic. within this time, his spatial theory found its finest elaboration in *The Production of Space* in 1974. Producing no fewer than eight books, in addition to several other titles, in that period he had devoted his work to give a novel understanding of the urban (Lefebvre, 2003: ix). Until then, urban research was confined to either a mere descriptive analysis of the city as one can see in the Chicago School's examination of city or conceptualising it as a superstructure simply expressing the basal relations of economic forces. Even Marx, who was Lefebvre's main source of inspiration and was confined in a narrow reception by other schools of Marxism especially those of structural Marxism which at the time had become predominant through Althusser's works and those of Stalinism that were pervasive among the French Communist Party from which Lefebvre was eventually expelled in 1958, did not deal with the urban problematic but in a few passages where he accentuated on spatial conditions of production:

The more production comes to rest on exchange value, hence on exchange, the more important do the physical conditions of exchange – the means of communication and transport – become for the costs of circulation. Capital by its nature drives beyond every spatial barrier. Thus the creation of the physical conditions of exchange – of the means of communication and transport – the annihilation of space by time – becomes an extraordinary necessity for it. (Marx, 1973:

524). . . Thus, while capital must on the one side strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse, i.e. to exchange, and conquer the whole earth for its market, it strives on the other side to annihilate this space with time, i.e. to reduce to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to another. The more developed the capital, therefore, the more extensive the market over which it circulates, which forms the spatial orbit of its circulation, the more does it strive simultaneously for an ever greater extension of the market and for the greater annihilation of space by time (1973: 540).

Although later on Engels addressed the problem of housing, the theorisation of the urban remained a pending task to be executed by Lefebvre. He strived to show that if it was industrial capital, productive means, and economic relations that comprise the objects of inquiry in the industrial era, now the massive process of urbanisation enables us to take the urban as an independent object of investigation. In this regard, it would not be wrong if we consider Lefebvre as a pioneer of what later was often referred to as the spatial turn in social sciences. Before that, as Foucault remarked, “space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic” (Foucault, 1980, in Crampton & Elden, 2007: 177). Breaking the primacy of time, Lefebvre revalued space and took it at the centre of his interrogation. He argues that space is not an apolitical realm. Quite the contrary, it is a field full of possibility. In a passage in *The Production of Space* he asks:

Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the procedures employed in their removal? The answer must be no. Later on I shall demonstrate the active – the operational or instrumental- role of space, as knowledge and action, in the existing mode of production. (Lefebvre, 1991: 11)

In this context and inspired by the May 1968 uprising, Lefebvre contended that today revolution would not only be the revolution *in* space, but also the revolution *of* space.

Thus, devoting a major span of his life to establishing a new understanding of the urban, Lefebvre was seeking to reconstruct a novel ontology of space in which space is no longer a mere product of social relations and actions, but is, in addition, a determinant of them. Therefore, I would like to assert that he furnished the basis for the politicisation of space by lending it a new and different meaning and implication.

### **1-1-2-3- The dialectical development of space**

The transformation of Tehran must be seen in the light of Lefebvrian dialectic. Drawing on Hegel's concept of concrete universal, Lefebvre conceived space as a concrete abstraction. Seeking for the missing link between idea and material, the reconciliation of philosophy and reality in Hegelian terms, Lefebvre brings practice to the fore: space is a concrete abstraction "concretize and realize itself socially in the social practice" (Stanek, 2008: 68). By introducing this concept, Lefebvre endeavoured to avoid the same mistake as scientists and participants in fragmented sciences frequently make. He aimed at establishing 'a unitary theory of space' which does not envisage space in isolation. In this respect, he recognises two types of misapprehension about space that have been long dominated urban scholarship. The first misapprehension came with the progress in economic sciences and its attendant logic of enumeration and description of things in themselves. Following this, "There were specialists waiting to divide up tasks and to perform them with the help of concepts or pseudo-concepts ...which were already an effective means for classifying and counting and mentally pigeonholing 'things' " (Lefebvre, 1991: 89). Imposing the same attitude toward space, "specialists fragment space and cut it up into pieces ... thus we are offered a geographical space, an ethnological space, a demographic space, a space peculiar to the information sciences, and so on as infinitum" (Lefebvre: 1991: 90-91). Therefore, just as Marx criticised those who see

products in ‘themselves’ at the expense of overlooking their social relations of production, Lefebvre highlights the ideological stances of practitioners of fragmented sciences by means of which space is treated as ‘space in itself’. (Lefebvre, 1991)

The second misapprehension of space emerged in the aftermath of the proliferation of Cartesian tradition. Since then space became a mere abstraction consisting of Cartesian coordinates. Detached from what it contains, space became neutral and indifferent to its content. Through this neutralisation, space is reduced to a mere form that has no relation to the events occurring within it; pure formalism. As a result, space was seen as a passive receptacle and gradually lost its political connotation.

Therefore, as Lefebvre suggests, in order to grasp space as a whole we first need to remove these reductive understandings of space. He believes that these misinterpretations merely serve ruling classes and technostuctures, to use Lefebvre’s term, whose knowledge is claimed to be neutral and independent from their values. To reveal their ideological impetus, Lefebvre uses the Marxian concept of ‘fetishism’ applied to space in which we lose our focus as the emphasis shifts to either ‘things in space’ or ‘emptied space’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 90-91). In contrast, Lefebvre adds, we must turn back to the very process of the production of space and the social relationships inherent in it.

Alongside Marx, this understanding is reminiscent of Hegel’s holistic philosophy concerning the relation between Idea and Nature. In other words, Lefebvre attempts to reconceptualise space in the same way as Hegel did to History, namely the reconciliation between the universal and the particular without falling into the trap of either monism or dualism. Hence the unity of

subject and object: “...everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance* but equally as *Subject*” (Hegel, 1977:10). Copleston elaborates this in more detail:

But if the Absolute is subject, what is its object? The only possible answer is that its object is itself. The Absolute is... the Totality, the whole of reality; and this totality is a process. In other words, the Absolute is a process of self-reflection: reality comes to know itself. And it does so in and through the human spirit. Nature is a necessary precondition of human consciousness in general: it provides the sphere of the objective without which the sphere of the subjective cannot exist (Copleston, 1962: 170-171).

To say, therefore, that the Absolute is self-thinking thought is to affirm the identity of the ideal and the real, of subjectivity and objectivity (Copleston: 1962: 172).

This identity of the ideal and the real plays a crucial role in Lefebvre’s theoretical approach too. Moreover, this identity-in-difference mediated by subject sets the ground for his dialectical thought. Given this, we can now turn back to the concept of concrete universality, but this time with the higher understanding of its meaning. Capturing space as a concrete universality, Lefebvre aims at turning our attention to the production of space rather than space in itself. He is concerned with the way in which we are able to theorise a ‘unitary conception of space’. The one in which “things could not be created independently of each other in space, whether moveable or fixed, without taking into account their interrelationships and their relationships to the whole” (Lefebvre, 1991: 124). In this light, Lefebvre highlights the historical role of the Bauhaus School in opening up the space into “perception, to conceptualization, just as it did to practical action” (Lefebvre, 1991:125).

Thus, by employing this unitary conception of space, I intend to provide a new narrative of Post-Revolutionary Tehran in which the distinction between discourses and practices is

resolved; the narrative in which the ideal and the real converge rather than diverge. To this end, Subject, be it individual or collective, takes an essential role in making history.

#### **1-1-2-4- Historical development of the city**

As Lefebvre himself frequently emphasises, to understand the process of production of space, we, first, need to bring into account the historical context which sheds light on the development of the city and the mechanism under which the urban transforms throughout history. This is because “in space, what came earlier continues to underpin what follows” (Lefebvre, 1991: 229). It is in *The Production of Space* that Lefebvre systematically elaborates and extends his idea in terms of transformation of the city in time. He begins with a zero-to-hundred axis signifying the development of the urban phenomena from its genesis to its accomplishment. Although Lefebvre’s historical schema seems as if it simply goes through time and thereby suffers from what he usually criticises orthodox Marxism for, that is the obsession with time and history, it is involved in spatial transformation, since it stretches over space too. It must be mentioned here that, as I explained in the previous section, historical development is not confined to mere material and social transformations, namely the transformation of land, mode of production, the city and urban, and so on. But it also encompasses the evolution of rationality and reason: “Even the most die-hard specialists don’t disdain the use of rationality... over the years, reason has assumed a succession of different forms” (Lefebvre, 2003: 72).

So, reading Lefebvre’s non-linear analysis of space, one should always recognise the dialectical relation between Idea, the material and the social. Here, trying to keep this non-linearity in elaborating Lefebvre’s theory, I will return to the dialectical relations between the elements in question at different points.



According to his schema, we can imagine an initial situation in which there was no sign of urbanity. It is the time when nature was predominant all over the world. The level of accomplishment is still at zero. Later, in *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre calls this *absolute space*, the pure nature, the earth abandoned to the elements (Lefebvre, 2003: 7). Then, by going further through this axis, there is a political town that refers to the Greek polis and Roman city. The emergence of these cities is the beginning of Lefebvre's triad dialectics. "Agriculture was little more than gathering, and was only formalised through pressure (authoritarian) from the urban centres" (Lefebvre, 2003: 8). Now the relationship between town and nature is mediated by a third element: countryside. So, here again, Lefebvre holds three elements simultaneously corresponding to his peculiar dialectics. The city became the centre of non-productive activities such as military, administration, and political. Thus, the city was defined in opposition to the countryside and was parasitic on it by exploiting it. The city also provided countryside with drainage, irrigation, and the construction of dams. In such an environment, ownership of the land was an exclusive right of a monarch, "the symbol of order". In this context, exchange and trade are marked as a heterotopy. Merchants and other people who were involved in such activities were excluded from the city and inhabited somewhere outside it; caravansaries, fairgrounds, suburbs.

The political city subsisted until the end of the Middle Ages when merchants finally penetrated the city. This entry into the city led to the replacement and supplement of the marketplace with the place of assembly, namely agora and forum. Subsequently:

"The merchant city succeeded the political city. At this time (approximately the fourteenth century in western Europe), commercial exchange became an urban function, which was embodied in a form (or forms, both architectural and urban)". (Lefebvre, 2003: 10)

But, the establishment of the merchant city brought about a very crucial moment for the history of the West. Until then, as has been mentioned, the social whole encompassed a paradoxical relationship between town and country on which was based the supremacy of country. Such a relationship gave the city the attribute of being heterotopic. But, from this moment on, “the town no longer appear[ed] as an urban island in the rural ocean” (Lefebvre, 2003: 11). In this new configuration of social whole the country was nothing more than the town’s environment, its horizon, its limit. The arrival of Industrial Revolution intensified this trend. The growth of industrial products, along with the accumulation of commercial capital and the existence of the marketplace gave rise to *industrial city*. Hence, rural areas had become part of the urban fabric. Roads, electricity, and machinery penetrated the village and transformed it to the attachment of the urban. Therefore, the countryside lost its autonomy and independence. “Peasants no longer worked for territorial lords, they produced for the city, for the urban market”. Also, the city was no longer understood as a heterotopia. It was a perfect complement to industrialisation. For the production of the city was the end, the objective and the meaning of industrial production (Lefebvre, 1968: 356, in Elden, 2004: 129). Against this background, industry, which might be mistakenly assumed to be associated to *non-city*, soon found its way to the city, “penetrated it, broke it apart, and in so doing brought about the urbanisation of society and the growth of urban fabric” (Lefebvre, 2003: 13). Urban projects permeated through the city by the arrival of the “secondary circuit of capital” which was a result of the crisis of currency. The function of this secondary circuit was to “siphon off of loose money set on speculation in real estate and financial assets, liquid loot yearning to become concrete in space” (Merrifield, 2006: 83).

This alliance between industrialisation and urbanisation led to what Lefebvre calls ‘second reversal’ in the historical achievement of urban society. Unlike the first reversal, the second one

was of a twofold nature; first, the urban was no longer subordinate to either rural or industry. Second, was the subordination of the global level to the private level, namely habiting. Recognising this twofold reversal, Lefebvre considers his work in the same vein as Marx's attempt in turning the upside down world on its feet. Furthermore, Lefebvre borrowed a metaphor from nuclear physics to explain the process of urbanisation and its ramifications. No description can completely describe the movement of urban fabric, Lefebvre argues, better than the process of implosion-explosion:

“the tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instrument, means, and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection numerous, disjunct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation homes, satellite towns) into space.” (Lefebvre, 2003: 14)

So, in keeping with Lefebvre's urbanisation axis, during the second reversal not only urban fabric went beyond national boundaries and extended itself over a very large part of the territory of great industrial countries, but also urban concentrations became gigantic (Lefebvre, 1996: 71). This had specific results for the relationship between town and country so that this relationship was no longer founded on contradiction. Instead, the urban became the centre of everything. Therefore, the triad dialectics of town-country-nature was substituted with a new triad, that is urban-rural-centre. In this context, centrality became a crucial aspect of urban phenomena insofar as Lefebvre says that there can be no city or urban reality without a centre (2003: 96). As one can expect from Lefebvre's dialectical thought, centrality brought about its negation within itself. Along with the accommodation of products, labourers, markets, ideas, and information, and parallel to the domination of exchange value and primacy of profit, the city experienced the massive process of embourgeoisification and gentrification which forced

working class and poor people to leave their settlements at the centre of the city and to move to the periphery and the edge of the city. In fact, urban phenomena is characterised with this centralisation-decentralisation dialectic which, in turn, denotes the spatialisation of the class struggle. This struggle gave birth to a new contradiction that replaced the old one, namely country-town contradiction; the conflictual relationship between centre and periphery marks the new contradiction of the urban era. At the heart of this contradiction lies Lefebvre's hope for the revolutionary moment; the moment which is able to topple the reign of exchange value and its resultant society, as Lefebvre calls it, 'bureaucratic society of controlled consumption'. For Lefebvre, the solution for the capitalist society is not to subvert the centrality of urban society and return to the nostalgia of rurality, but to transcend this centrality so that use value is substituted for exchange value and the city becomes the centre of art, play and festivity. The centrality of the urban, Lefebvre holds, should work as a catalyst to gather information and increase encounters rather than centralise the administration of decision-making (2003: 97).

As has been explained so far, in Lefebvre's historical narrative three periods are distinguished from each other: the rural, the industrial, the urban. Within these periods, there are three organisations of space-time. Agrarian topoi, for instance, "were an immediate product of nature" (Lefebvre, 2003: 125). Its space-time followed the pattern of the cyclical rhythm of nature in which local particularities were juxtaposed. In industrial cases, on the other hand, industrial rationality prevailed and tended to homogenise all places according to productivist criteria. Superseding industrial time, urban space-time appeared as a *differential*:

"each place and each moment existing only within a whole, through the contrasts and oppositions that connect it to, and distinguish it from, other places and moments. This space-time is defined

by unitary (global: constitutive of wholes, of groups formed around a center, of diverse and specific centralities) as well as dualistic properties” (Lefebvre, 2003: 37)

At the core of the urban space, as Lefebvre puts it, lie *differences* juxtaposing various elements and moments within it. However, these differences should not be confused with particularities of rural time. Against the isolation of particularities, differences are perceived and conceived through their relationships. They know each other through their mutual recognition, test one another, and in this way are strengthened or weakened (Lefebvre, 2003: 96).

Endeavouring to unveil the characteristics of the urban, Lefebvre introduces a triad of *isotophy*, *heterotopy*, and *u-topia*. An isotopy is a place and everything that surrounds it (neighbourhood, immediate environment), that is, everything that makes a place the *same* place. However, alongside this very place there is a *different place*, an *other place*; *heterotopy* (Lefebvre, 2003: 39). Elsewhere, Lefebvre clarifies that the urban cannot be defined as an accomplished reality, situated behind the actual in time. Conversely, the urban is a horizon, an illuminating virtuality. It is the possible waiting to be realised. The urban is utopia and needs to overcome the obstacles that currently make it impossible (2003: 16-17). Utopia, thus, is elsewhere, the non-place that has no place and seeks a place of its own. It reveals the virtuality of urban reality. It characterises the dialectical movement, the immanent contradiction, of urban space-time. Therefore, as Lefebvre emphasises, urban space *is* concrete contradiction.

#### **1-1-2-5- Synchronic analysis of the urban: city as an oeuvre**

The emergence of urban phenomena accompanied by advances in communication technology and transportation facilities mobilised systems of knowledge, ideologies, products, labour forces, and capital. These developments, in turn, lent urban reality a new form, function and

structure. To appreciate this new configuration of space, Lefebvre believes, we need to refer to globality (2003: 211). This means each particular city is not only influenced by the forces and immediate relations functioning within its borders, but also highly affected by global and general processes working above it. In other words, the process of production of space proceeds from the intersection of two different plains; one above the city and the other below it. Thus, city, in Lefebvre's eyes, is a product of reciprocally continuous interaction between the planes in question. Before explaining the structure of this interaction, there is a concern that I would like to draw our attention to in order to prevent misinterpreting Lefebvre's analysis of levels of urban reality. We should always remember that Lefebvre is a dialectician. There is no one-way causality in his theoretical constellation at all. Hence, his synchronic analysis of the urban phenomena, too, should be interpreted under the light of his triad dialectics in which each term attends in the dialectical relationship with other terms at the same time without having privilege to them. In the same respect, in the analysis of levels of reality, the city is not merely a passive outcome of various causes. Quite the contrary, the city intervenes in the dialectical relationships with other forces and relationships. In fact, as Lefebvre points out, in its productive role, space:

“becomes part of the relations of production and the forces of production. Thus the concept cannot be isolated or remain static. It becomes dialectical: product-producer, underpinning economic and social relations.” (Lefebvre, 2003a: 208)

Therefore, rejecting the reductive schema of base-structure-superstructure of strict Marxism, Lefebvre introduced the product-producer dialectic in which city plays an active role.

Having been reminded of the dialectical foundation of Lefebvre's approach, we can now move to his notion of levels of reality. Looking through present-day society, Lefebvre distinguishes three levels; general (global) processes, intermediary level, and relations of immediacy. Global

processes, the far order, is the level of society as a whole with its constitutive elements and its history. Regulating society by its institutions (among which the most powerful are Church and State), by a legal code, and by a culture, the general processes are projected into the practico-material reality, that is the city, and are embodied in its spatial configuration (Lefebvre, 1996: 101-2). Thus is the mediatory role of the city in materialising moral and legal principles. Furthermore, the city transmits the far order to the near order, namely relationships of individuals in groups and the relationships of these groups among themselves. “Containing near order, the city as a mediation supports it and maintains relations of production and property” (Lefebvre, 1996: 101). It is essential to note that although the city is tightly associated with society on the one hand, and highly depends on relationships of immediacy on the other hand, neither is it a passive translation of society into the ground nor is reduced to the configuration of the relationships between individuals. Conversely, the city is close to the work of art, an *oeuvre* (Lefebvre, 1996: 101). The city is a result of the process of production, the production of human beings by human beings rather than production of objects. What is in Lefebvre’s approach of crucial importance is the role of urban subjects, and their intervention in the process of production. Lefebvre points out that general processes such as economic, social, cultural and political ones act as key figures in the production of space by enabling groups to “insert themselves, to take charge of spaces, to appropriate them” (Lefebvre, 1996: 105-6). The concept of appropriation of space could be better understood if we bring into consideration Lefebvre’s interest in the *Dionysian* side of existence. With reference to Nietzsche, Lefebvre uses ancient Greek mythology emphasising the conflict between Dionysian and Apollonian aspects of the city. Apollo is the god of reason and sun, while Dionysus is the god of wine and intoxication. The Nietzschean distinction between Apollonian and Dionysian, Lefebvre argues,

refers to the dual feature of the living being and its relationship to space. While the former denotes Logos (rationality, systemisation, control, establishment), the latter stresses Eros (waste, play, struggle, art, festival). These two forces are in a permanent struggle in producing their own space:

“On the side of the Logos is rationality, constantly being refined and constantly asserting itself in the shape of organizational forms, structural aspects of industry, systems and efforts to systematize everything. ... in the opposite camp are the forces that seek to appropriate space: various forms of self-management or workers’ control of territorial and industrial entities, communities and communes, elite groups striving to change life and transcend political institutions and parties” (Lefebvre, 1991: 392)

Therefore, while Logos results in domination, manipulation, systematisation, and ultimately leads to homogenised space, Anti-Logos gives way to desire and the different. It is through Anti-Logos that the space is “liable to be eroticized and dramatized by means of desires, by means of music, by means of differential systems” (Lefebvre, 1991: 391). Thus, the Logos-Eros dialectic is a conflict between ‘domination’ and ‘appropriation’. This dialectic has special implications for the production of space. Thereby, the outcome of the production of space far from being a particular, pliable, instrumental object would be an oeuvre. In this regard, each city is an oeuvre of its historical time. Its objectivity, or objectality, to use Lefebvre’s term, is more similar to the cultural product, like a written book. The city is a written book of its own time, but a written book that is under incessant writing and revising by its co-authors. “The book never ends and contains many blank or torn pages” (Lefebvre, 2003: 121). It reflects both what it contains and what contains it. Hence, the structure and the grammar of the language are projected themselves into the book. But, this does not exclude the characteristics unique to the



book, “since there are always faults, voids, and lacunae everywhere.” Each author uses their creative talent to “insinuate himself through these fissures” (Lefebvre, 2003: 86).

#### **1-1-2-6- Use value and exchange value**

The break between the political and the industrial city was also portrayed from another perspective. Being faithful to the heritage of Marx, Lefebvre employs the concepts of use value and exchange value to reveal the social consequences of the emergence of the industrial city. In so doing, he introduced a new understanding of city as an *oeuvre*, a work of art. Exploring the transformation of *oeuvre* in the course of history, Lefebvre explains under which conditions and by means of which logic the foundation of our cities moved from use value to exchange value. During the Middle Ages, Lefebvre suggests, when princes, kings, aristocracy, and oligarchy were still dominant, the city was a sphere of giving legitimacy to one’s privilege and supremacy. It was rather common to show your love to the city by “sumptuously spending your fortune: buildings, foundations, palaces, embellishments, festivities” (Lefebvre: 1996: 67). Consequently, notables, in the period of the Middle Ages, produced very creative buildings and monuments. However, this sense of creativity was lost when industrial rationality pervaded society and bourgeoisies replaced kings and princes. Industrial city brought with itself a specific logic which was based on growth of exchange and accumulation of capital. Soon, the production substituted *oeuvre* and “making” replaced work of art. The power was no longer defined on the basis of giving to the city, on the contrary, it was founded on exploiting and accumulating as much as possible. Lefebvre concludes:

City and urban reality are related to use value. Exchange value and the generalization of commodities by industrialization tend to destroy it by subordination the city and urban reality which are refuges of use value, the origins of a virtual predominance and revalorization of use (Lefebvre, 1996: 67-68).

### **1-1-2-7- Habiting and habitat**

However, this was not the only implication of the transition from political city to industrial city. The enormous process of urbanisation accompanied by huge suburbanisation, which Lefebvre calls it, de-urbanised urbanisation, and led to the disappearance of urban consciousness. Here, highly influenced by Heidegger, Lefebvre contrasts the concept of “habitat” with “habiting” to elucidate and disclose the ill consequences of urbanisation/suburbanisation. Quoting from Heidegger, “mortals inhabit while they save the earth, while they wait for the gods... while they conduct their lives in preservation and use” (Lefebvre, 1996: 76). He believed that as a consequence of urbanisation and housing estates the notion of habitat excluded the concept of habiting. In this binary the former signifies merely the right to housing and the latter refers to the right to participation in a social life. Industrialisation along with its complementary part, urbanisation, Lefebvre adds, have reduced habiting to habitat. Following industrial logic, urban planners and public initiatives provided as quickly as possible, at the least cost, the greatest possible number of housing units. By this, the concept of habitat was brought to its purest form by state bureaucracy (Lefebvre: 1996: 79). In addition, Lefebvre remarks, state rationality excluded the notion of habiting in favour of habitat: “That is the plasticity of space, its modelling and the appropriation by groups and individuals of the conditions of their existence” (Lefebvre, 1996: 79).

By the proliferation of housing in the suburbs, the law of speculation on plots and property became dominant. This trend, in turn, led housing into property wealth and urban land into exchange value. Since then, inhabitants have not considered themselves as the participants in creating oeuvre whose right is to take part in the decision-making process and to appropriate urban space. Urban thought, instead, opted for “habitat”, “A simplified function, which limited the human being to a handful of basic acts: eating, sleeping, and reproducing” (Lefebvre: 2003: 81).

#### **1-1-2-8- Political aspect of Lefebvre’s theory**

Criticising Foucault for his neglect in not paying adequate attention to the role of state in structuring and managing power relations, Lefebvre devoted a significant part of his works to scrutinise the effect and implications of the state for the modern society. The question of the politics for Lefebvre is tightly bound up with the problematic of state, since he sees the state at the centre of the modern world. *De l’Etat*, a four-volume selection consisting of more than 1,600 pages, is the result of his reflection on this topic covering a wide range of issues such as the role of the modern state in organising space, state mode of production, theory of state, mondialisation, and so on. Opposing ‘statesmen’, who act politically, to ‘men of state’, who accept the existing State as a central given of reality and pose all the problems related to the knowledge of society and to science and reality itself, Lefebvre saw himself as a statesman calling into question the existing institutions and criticising the current type of State (2009: 54).

Central to his radical critique was the way in which the modern state produces its own space to deal with its contradictions and to overcome its crises, in other words, the way capitalism survives (Lefebvre, 1976). As is apparent from the previous sentence, one of Lefebvre’s

attempts in *De l'Etat* was to unveil the strong affiliation between the modern state and capitalism. In so doing, Lefebvre introduced the term 'state mode of production' to show how the state controls and manages space to maintain the ideal of economic growth of capitalist society (2009: 111). He believes not only liberalists' doctrine, but also social-democrats' policies have led space to be a mere commodity to sell and buy. In this regard, the solution for consumerist society has been misled into the distributive policy by social democracy through which the main aim is to distribute wealth in a fairer way.

However, Lefebvre contends, we should root through production rather than distribution to find the causes of the problem. Therefore, both of these doctrines, that is liberalist and social-democratic, would strengthen the role of the state in controlling and managing the society which in turn reinforces the state mode of production. For Lefebvre, as a Marxist, the only legitimate answer is the one that addresses the destructive logic of commodification and capital accumulation. Thus, by criticising state socialism hidden in the Lassallean opportunism, in which the problem of capitalism is simply reduced to a matter of quantity, Lefebvre draws upon Lenin's *The State and Revolution* to accentuate that the solution is withering away of the state which is "a matter of transforming quantity into realized quality as methodically and as fully as is possible to conceive" (Lefebvre, 2009: 87).

According to Lefebvre's reception of Marx, the theory of withering away of the State has two sequences. First, when the proletariat organised as the ruling class:

"The organ of suppression is now the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage slavery. And since the majority of people itself suppresses its oppressors, a special force for suppression is no longer necessary! In this sense, the state begins to wither away." (Lenin, 1918, in Lefebvre, 2009: 88)

Building on the theory of withering away of the State, Lefebvre introduces a new mode of governance, namely ‘Autogestion’, which is based on self-management and grassroots control of democracy. This idea aims to transform the state into a radically decentralised, participatory institutional framework that not only allows social struggles and contradictions but also actively advocates them. Through this stance, the state would serve as an arena for spatial autogestion, direct democracy, and democratic control, affirmation of the differences produced in and through that struggle (2009: 251).

#### **1-1-2-9- Politics of space**

At the core of Lefebvre’s thought, especially since the 1960s onward, lies his aphorism that “there is a politics of space because space is political”. Through his works, Lefebvre made a great effort to show how different societies with various modes of production produce their own spaces to govern over their territories. In *The production of space* Lefebvre explains that the collapse of the Soviet Union was due to its failure to produce a socialist space. Lefebvre also spent a remarkable part of his work elaborating how this politics of space works within capitalism. In doing so, he begins with urban planning which, in turn, is a product of fragmentation of sciences started in the aftermath of industrialisation. By establishing a science of space, Lefebvre argues, capitalism sought to constitute a new epistemology. Separated from other sciences, this new field produced its own language and practice and eventually was raised to a level of scientificity. Furthermore, through the writings of its scientists and practitioners, the science of space was isolated from its context (Lefebvre, 2009: 169). It became a pure form; the logic of space, Cartesian coordination. Here, the reign of measurement and calculation plays a key role; space of urbanists and architects was perceived as geometrical and everything was

seen as calculable and quantifiable so that decisions can be made in a programmable way (Elden, 2004: 145).

These conditions led to the objectification of space so that space was given a neutral character. By apoliticising space, the science of space, urban planning, therefore became the crown. Since then, capitalism covered its ideology and practices under the name of scientificity and technocracy. In this way, space transformed to an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, capitalist, to overcome their crises. In this respect, Lefebvre argues, they looked for a secondary circuit, an appendage in relation to the usual primary circuit of production and consumption, in case of fluctuations in the latter. So, their strategy is to normalise the secondary circuit, the real estate market, perhaps preserving it as a compensatory sector (Lefebvre, 2009: 175). In this regard, Lefebvre argues, there is a crucial task for critical analysts to reveal how and according to what strategy a given space has been produced (2009: 171).

Given Lefebvre's holistic view, far from being a distinctively separate discipline, politics is an immanent constitutive moment of space. It interacts with space simultaneously forming and being conditioned by space. To keep up with this holistic view, the political moment is integrated in my study as a separate section. There are two notions here to be mentioned. First, as it is already emphasised political moment should not be considered as an *ontologically* separate moment of space. Quite the contrary, this separation is simply for the sake of *analytical* discussion. As we have to discuss several topics separately, there is a distinct section allocated to the discussion of political moment. Secondly, it was not possible to represent all of the political moments in a single study. So, in this work, I have only focused on space of resistance to exemplify this moment in its varied forms and times throughout empirical chapters. But, here I have theoretically been involved in a discussion on the space of resistance to show how it is

conceptualised through diverse strands of spatial thought. Given the specificity of Tehran, at the end of the following section, I attempted to conceptualise the space of resistance in Tehran.

### **1-1-3- On urban theory**

In this section I shall go through urban literature extracting underlying concepts of varied perspectives in order to categorise them based on their perspectives on the urban question. The aim of this section is to get critically involved with contemporary urban thoughts to represent the similarities and differences between the reception of the concept of the urban implicated in this study and other strands of urban theories. Needless to say, a comprehensive review of all urban theories is beyond the capacity of any single research. Hence, the examination of urban theories, here, is confined to two currents of urban thought which are more relevant to the theoretical framework and the empirical geography of this thesis. First, I will focus on those theories that have mainly grown within the domain of political economic analysis of the urban. Dominant themes of this cluster are more or less built upon Marxian ideas, in general, and Lefebvre's concepts in particular. Touching upon postcolonial theory, the second cluster centres around the experience of the Global South. Getting critically involved with the latter, we are enabled to go beyond the dominant strands of urban thought mapping Tehran within a new geographies of theory (Roy, 2009).

One of the forgotten name in the realm of urban studies is Frederic Le Play whose *Le Science Sociale*, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a pioneer in examining urban problems- poverty, unemployment, congestion, etc. (Savage & Warde, 1993:9). Participating in the development of a newly born social science, Le Play defined sociology as “interplay between place, work and folk” (Savage, in May, et al. 2005:357). A century later, no one remembers his name,

though, the tradition he left turned urban sociology as one of the most eminent trends within social sciences. Nineteenth-century Industrial cities that, by the turn of the century, were introduced into Fordist production and Taylorism discipline became the subject of exploration by the first generation of urban specialists. Along with Britain's Sociological Society which was founded in mid-1930s, Chicago School develop on the basis that the abovementioned tradition had founded. Despite their vast empirical studies, these initial urban thoughts, did not get theoretically involved with the concept of the urban. Taken for granted, cities were treated as fixed, bounded territories influencing human actions in some way or another. In this sense, the primary encounter with the urban within the history of urban studies was confined to the 'things in space' rather than space itself. Even Wirth's celebrated *Urbanism as a way of life* which was ostensibly meant to set a theoretical context for the urban did not achieve its goal.

His theory:

“was instead premised on the assumption that social life continued to be – indeed, necessarily *is* – organized into coherently bounded spatial envelopes ('human settlement') that could be neatly typologized, and whose demographic properties (including his classic triad of size, density, and heterogeneity) engendered distinctive forms of social behaviour within those boundaries (Brenner & Schmid, 2014: 738-739).

The reign of Chicago School within the domain of urban theory lasted for almost 50 years (Ibid, 358) leading to numerous investigations focusing on the way in which a city channels our behaviours and how associations of family and locale are substituted by the secondary associations ended up in insecurity of urban life.

Post-war era, however, witnessed a paradigm shift in urban theory. Historically, Castell's *The urban question* in 1970s was a fierce attack on mainstream urban sociology at the time. Finding



ecological explanation of the urban processes insufficient, Castell criticised its evolutionary organicism ideology (Gottdiener, 1997). Accordingly, he states that the “human ecology has attempted a systematization of its researches, by codifying them in the terms of ecological complex or eco-system” (Castells, 1977: 119). Therefore, Castells believes, urban ecology remains on the formal level in so far as it is not able to excavate the root of urban configuration, that is general economic laws (Ibid). Having criticised dominant urban thoughts at the time, Castell introduced a certain political economic analysis of the urban. Adopting Althusserian conception, he defined the urban as a subcategory of the broader social organisation. So, he rejects any independent ontological status of space:

There is no specific theory of space but quite simply a deployment and specification of the theory of social structure, in order to account for the characteristic of the particular social form, space, and if its articulation with other, historically given, forces and processes” (Castells, 1977: 124)

As a result, what constitutes the legitimate subject of analysis, or in Castells’ language, a theoretical subject, is social formation within which the urban plays its own part. Following a structural interpretation of the social whole, Castells introduced a specific function into the urban. He believes that the urban is specified according to its role as the loci of reproduction of labour power:

“[T]he urban seems to me to connote directly the processes relating to labour power other than in its direct application to the production process ... the urban units thus seem to be to the process of reproduction what the companies are to the production” (Castells, 1977: 236-237)

In addition to Castells, Harvey’s works made a body of urban literature evolving around political economy of the urban. Variedly influenced by Lefebvrian theoretical constellation,

both of these scholars have greatly transformed urban theory channelling it into a new path. Since then, not only were urban studies involved in political economy of the city, but also the effects of global trends were recognised as an effective force in constructing and reconstructing of urban fabric.

Urban studies have also had another turn by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To discover this shift we must go back to the early 1990s and look into the establishment of subaltern studies by a group of South Asian academics who were interested in the experience of global south of colonial era. Relying on the work of Western philosopher, and among them Derrida, Said, and Foucault, subaltern studies criticise the Eurocentric nature of the knowledge generation. In general, they demanded the contribution of non-west scholars on this process since despite the similarities, the experience and social history of non-Western societies have a lot to add to the already-established knowledge within social science. Later on, in the early 2000s, postcolonial approach, found his way into urban theory too. Introducing fruitful concepts, postcolonial urban theorists delve into local histories in order to discover the historical basis of current social formation. They believe that the dominant Western epistemology has colonised the condition of understanding of urban trends. In this light, researchers have to first decolonise the sphere of urban knowledge generation through introducing new concepts and ideas.

Oren Yiftachel, for instance, proposes the concept of gray space to specify the process of informalisation. Gray spaces, he states (2009: 92), are not confined to the deprived peripheries of metropolitans. Privileged edges, those which straddle the high boundaries of the power systems, exempted from strict legal compliance are also included in gray spaces. In many cases, transgression of the urban regulation occurs from above when forces of development, security, and national needs get together. To highlight this new aspect of informalisation, Yiftachel seeks

to deconstruct its old meaning. In so doing, he coined the concepts of “selective non-planning” to show that “far from a profession promoting just and sustainable urbanism, planning is rather a system *managing profound societal inequalities*- a system of creeping apartheid (2009: 93). Accordingly, urban planning works hand in hand with other mechanisms of active or negligent exclusion. In the same vein, Yiftachel prefers the notion of “creeping apartheid” over other words such as discrimination or inequality gaps which are well-established in conventional vocabulary of urban studies. Working on Palestinian cities, in Yiftachel’s eyes, the inferior position of those who are trapped in gray spaces is not merely due to discrimination.

“It is also the result of deeply embedded institutional, material and spatial system which accord unequal packages of rights and capabilities to the various groups as well as fortify the separation between them” (2009:94).

Countering the conventional definition of informality as a territorial formation, McFarlane introduces a new understanding of it as particular forms of practices. As Ananya Roy puts it, the planning departments have a legitimised power to determine what is legal and what is illegal. In effect, through these practices slums are stigmatised and deemed to be destroyed while the informal housing practices of the elite are privileged. In other words, “Metropolitan informal urbanization is made possible through the particular regulatory logics of agricultural land that exist at the rural/urban interface of many Third World cities” (Roy, 2005: 149). In this view, informality is not a result of state regulation but rather is produced by the state itself. Thus, informality becomes a key factor within urban planning regime. By deconstructing the meaning of informality, Roy attempts to stress the spaces of suspension of regulation in a way that benefits those at the top of urban hierarchy. What follows is that illegality is proven to be a constitutive element of the production of space. So, according to Roy’s conceptualisation,

informality and formality are not mutually exclusive categories. In fact, rather than being presented as a given condition, informality is constructed through urban practices. Seen through this lens, one can challenge the presumed illegality of slums that, through mainstream approach, stand against the road of urban development. However, the very dichotomic categorisation of formal/informal is in itself an indispensably constitutive practice of urban planning that, in postcolonial approach, calls for a strategy to be confronted.

Neema Kudva criticises a separation principle that permeates urban planning and public policy. Based on this principle, she argues (2009: 1614), “the politics of informality the processes by which city residents assert their rights are conceived in relation either to work *or* housing”. Nevertheless, our everyday life systematically defied this separation. For, our workplaces interpenetrate our residential spaces and vice versa. Neglecting this mutual interpenetration, mainstream studies of informality focuses more on the unequal production of urban residential spaces and housing provision and services. They comparatively pay less attention to the relation between informal settlements and dominant pattern of urban development.

The new wave of studies of informality, nonetheless, has sought to deal with overlapping of work and home examining them on a same plane. Informality literature enables us to come up with a novel understanding of expulsion processes by means of which urban space expands, rural space entangles and rural life disentangles (Merrifield, 2017). Transforming the point of analysis from geographically-bounded places to the production of space gives us the opportunity to study apparently separated spaces of work, home, and leisure simultaneously within a unitary theory of space. Furthermore, we need to scrutinise the interrelation between spaces and politics if we are to grasp the mechanism of production of informality.

This new conception of informality, as one can imagine, is indebted to the set of ideas Lefebvre developed through his work since 1960s on. It would not be wrong if we claim that Lefebvre's *The production of space* was written to prove that space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle, and is therefore a crucial political issue: there is a politics of space because space is political (Lefebvre in Elden, 2007). In Lefebvre's eyes, space is a media and a medium through which social practices are embodied. Having said that, he denounces the well-established understanding of space considering it as a neutral container of urban actions. His well-known dialectical triad, namely spatial practices, representation of space and space of representation is mainly devised to empower the particular meaning of space that is filled with power relations, the meaning which is set upon a mutually constructive interrelation between space, power, and practices.

Among his triad, the last instance, that is space of representation, has been celebrated as the space of freedom and resistance. Soja's *Third space* is an attempt to develop Lefebvre's space of representation into other different domains such as literature, women studies, postcolonial theories, and urban planning to highlight those spaces that escape from dominant relations. Space of representation can be also defined as a site of alternative knowledge generation which in turn can lead to distinctive forms of work organisation and urban practices (Torkameh, forthcoming). While Fordist system used to organise work structure based on workplace, plants and factories, the informal mode of production seems to be rooted in neighbourhood as the site of organisation and movement. As a result of the transformation of the foci of organisation from workplace to residential spaces, as Roy states, we encounter to new social movements that fight not merely for better job but also for better life.

Lefebvre believes that the motto “Changing life! Changing society” cannot be materialised if its associated space is not produced. Hence, if we are to deal with informality the question of production of space must be come to the fore simultaneously. In the same line, Shatkin argues (2004: 2469), while shelter crisis is inherent to globalising cities in developing countries, as a contradiction emerges between the extensive redevelopment of rising property values, urban planners and policy makers tend to forget the increasing rate of informal settlements. Urban development, he points out, in market economy is inherently uneven. Within this context, globalisation is adopted to “take advantage of technological innovation in telecommunications and transport to lower the cost of production by seeking cheaper land, labour and natural resources in increasingly peripheral locations, while simultaneously attempting to maximise the exchange value of goods and services by expanding markets” (Sassen 1998 in Shatkin, 2004: 2471). The result of this global process is to decentralise the production as corporations seek cheaper lands and, subsequently, labour power are deported into peripheral places in both developed and developing countries. The deportation of urban poor to the peripheries, moreover, has made an effective transportation system necessary. Development in transport system, in turn, has channel a huge amount of money into urban infrastructure improvement which disproportionately benefited automobile owners and wealthier commuters who can afford the high cost of light rail travel (Ibid: 2475). On the other hand, as Shatkin’s study of Manila suggests, these improvements have faced low-income population with unprecedented challenges. Dislocation, longer and more hazardous trips along with rising cost of living and environmental deterioration can be mentioned as the consequence of urban redevelopment of the centres. What this emerging condition reveals is the “forgetting of the shelter needs of the poor in policy and planning” (2004: 275).

The root of this emerging urban phenomenon can be traced back to the dominant mode of production in the neoliberal era. From the global level, insofar as neoliberal state becomes consummate agent of the market, capitalist production takes over social reproduction. This condition is termed revanchist urbanism by Neil Smith (2002) in which the mid-twenty century welfare state was replaced by a neoliberal one that waged war against the deprived, working class, youth culture, and immigrants. As the result of rescaling the global, the scale of the urban is recast. Gentrification which initially emerged as “a sporadic, quaint, and local anomaly in the housing markets, is now thoroughly generalized as an urban strategy that takes over from liberal urban policy” (Smith, 2002: 427). Following this, Smith accentuates the inherent link between new form of labour division and informality in which the urban scale plays a key role. As industrial capitalism developed cities increasingly showed the tendency toward centralization of capital, while the scale of the urban was structured based on geographical limits to daily labour journey. In other words, it was social and territorial organisation of social reproduction that specified the determination of the urban scale (Smith, 2002: 431). The social restructuring of the economic procedures in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has paved the way for this rescaling of the urban. Because of the deindustrialisation in 70s and 80s along with extensive regional destructuring and restructuring system of production that was territorialised at the regional scale was disembedded from their definitive national context. Subsequently, the system of production territorialised within a wider context of metropolitan centres. As the result of this global restructuring, the traditional industrial cores of American Northeast and English Midlands where the national capital used to be extracted, now were replaced by huge metropolitan centres of Sao Paulo, Bangkok, Mexico City, Mumbai, and Shanghai. Neoliberal urbanism is also marked by new urban politics, namely gentrification and regeneration, which are transferred all

over the world as a global urban strategy. Third wave of gentrification, as Smith has shown (2002: 443), “had evolved into a vehicle for transforming whole areas into new landscape complexes that pioneer a comprehensive class-influenced urban remake... gentrification as urban strategy weaves global financial markets together with large- and medium-sized real-estate developers, local merchants, and property agents with brand-name retailers, all lubricated by city and local government for whom beneficent social outcomes are now assumed to derive from the market rather than from its regulation”.

Smith’s analysis reminds us the work of Lefebvre. He has also emphasised on the supplementary role of urbanism in facilitating the circulation of capital in the late industrial period. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, urbanisation took over industrialisation. As Lefebvre believes, industrialisation might have bred systemic urbanisation, but, urbanisation now engendered industrialisation (2002:447).

Since then, by the development of the waves of globalisation one can witness the intensification of the consequence of this global urbanism. Setting informality within global level, Asef Bayat emphasises on the dual consequences of this global restructuring in developing countries. There is a process of integration, on the one hand, and a process of exclusion on the other hand. To capture the spirit of the third millennium, Bayat proposes, one has to devise a new theoretical constellation since the new condition escapes from the crack of the former conceptualisation. Explaining the emerging condition of our time, he suggests (2000: 535-536) that “the new global restructuring is reproducing subjectivities (marginalized and deinstitutionalized group such as the unemployed, casual labour, street subsistence workers and street children), social space and thus terrain of political struggles that current theoretical perspectives cannot on their own account for”.



Classical Marxist theories for instance, Bayat claims, either leave this new transformation unseen or homogenise urban poor under the title of lumpenproletariat, the non-proletarian urban group. Subsequently, urban dispossessed are left behind even by communist parties of the Third World as being not productive. This understanding stems from the old binary of revolutionary/passive forces which in itself makes the emergence of other possibilities impossible. Criticising this binary, Bayat conceptualises the current approaches into four identifiable perspectives; the passive poor, survival strategy, urban territorial movement, and everyday resistance. The first perspective focuses on cultural/psychological essentials as components of a culture of poverty (2000:536). This attitude characterises marginalised people as a cultural type who is identified by a sort of fatalism, rootlessness, unadaptability, traditionalism, criminality, lack of ambition, and so on.

The second perspective relies on survival strategy as the distinct feature of urban poor. It denotes that although the disadvantaged lack power and authority, nonetheless they do their best to get by. In this way, survival approaches are one step ahead from 'culture of poverty' approach in attributing a level of subjectivity to urban poor. When it comes to recession period, they resort to varied activities from begging and prostitution to reorientation of their consumption pattern. In the famine and war time, furthermore, the deprived choose to leave their home even if emigration is discouraged (Ibid,539).

Urban poor in the third perspective appears as political agents. Despite political suppression, social stigmatisation, and cultural exclusion, they participate in territorially social movements. What keeps this group of inhabitants together, despite their varied social status, level of income, job position, and cultural background is a shared common place of residence, community (Bayat, 2000:540). Shared space and the needs related to common property set the context for

growing a sense of 'spatial solidarity'. Although this spatial solidarity more or less can be observed all over the globe, the quality of its community and its formation differ greatly. In Latin America, Bayat explains, due to the multiplicity of competing interest group (government, private interests and others) the progressive urban movements have more opportunity to emerge and develop.

Lacking a clear definition of the concept of resistance, the 'political poor' perspective has the potential to leap into a borderless Foucauldian reception of power; 'wherever there is power there is resistance'. This conception provides us with a recognition of human agency, though, disregards an uneven circulation of power that is fiercer and more congealed in some spaces than others. Furthermore, the vague definition of resistance implies a conceptual confusion resulted in the equation of any types of action with resistance. 'Political poor' perspective intends to condemn previous approaches because of their inherent essentialism, though, itself reversely is trapped into another form of essentialism by translating daily activities into necessarily conscious actions. This perspective overlooks the fact that urban governments often encourage local initiatives and community participation insofar as they do not ignite rebellion behaviours. In this case, governments decentre parts of their responsibility putting them on the shoulder of local agents. Following this logic, Miraftab argues (2009), one must interpret the growing number of NGOs in developing countries. "a large body of literature", she adds, "has documented how such routinization of community participation depoliticizes communities' struggles and extends state control within the society" (2009:34).

Having elaborated on the three former perspectives, Bayat introduces his ideas on the subject. Urban subaltern politics in the conditions of globalisation is specified as 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary'. Seeking to go beyond the shortage of the old concepts, it is

described as the “silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives” (Bayat, 2000: 545). This is a daily struggle, open-ended, without leadership, specific ideology or predetermined structure. People who are involved in quiet encroachment do not interpret their actions as a political strategy. Rather, they are understood as routine actions which stem from necessity of meeting daily needs.

Needless to say that there is an incessant conflict between different department of urban government and the ordinary people which is nowhere manifested better than the streets, the public space par excellence. The streets act as a collective means of self-expression for those who are deprived of other media to be recognised. That is exactly why the streets are the loci of 24/7 surveillance. This dynamic of the power relationships between the encroachers and the authorities is named ‘street politics’ in Bayat’s terminology. This consists of a set of conflicts between collective masses and authorities. Bayat himself admits that these urban deprived are not able to organise an extensive struggle as was the goal of orthodox Marxist theory. However, he believes quiet encroachment “remains a most viable enabling strategy, which the urban grassroots pursue irrespective of what we, social scientists, think of it” (2000:554).

#### **1-1-4- On the space of resistance**

The space of resistance is where the urban flees from being entangled by dominating tendency. It is the space of the residual remaining out of the realm of representation, those particularities that are not captured by predominant signs and symbols. It is partly inspired by Lefebvre’s space of representation. “Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabitants and users” (Lefebvre, 1991: 39). Space of resistance is also indebted to Lefebvre’s concept of differential space where, in contrast to the homogenising characteristic

of abstract space, differences and peculiarities are *raisons d'être* of it. In other words, in Lefebvre's eyes differential space serves as a resistance to the forces of homogenisation imposed by abstract space.

So, the current section shares Lefebvre's hope for realisation of the virtual object, i.e. 'alternative society', in which a degree of self-management is implemented over a certain territorial entity (Lefebvre, 1991: 382). In so doing, I wish to address the mediatory role of individual or collective subjects who challenge the solidly constituted relations:

“We know what counter-projects consist or what counter-space consists in – because practice demonstrates it. When a community fights the construction of urban motorways or housing developments, when it demands ‘amenities’ or empty spaces for play and encounter, we can see how a counter-space can insert itself into spatial reality: against the Eye and the Gaze, against quantity and homogeneity, against power and the arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the ‘private’ and of industrial profitability.” (Lefebvre, 1991: 381-382)

The space of resistance could also be identified by means of the logic of levels. Classifying various levels of urban reality, Lefebvre analytically distinguishes between global (G), private (P), and intermediate (M) levels. “The global level is the realm of abstract power and the state, whose will is exercised through some kind of representation, usually of politicians and men of means who assert themselves strategically” (Merrifield, 2006: 88). While the private level is the sphere of everyday life and lived reality, intermediate level denotes the urban reality and its intermediary position in uniting the two former realities on the urban plane. Power belongs to the level G, as Lefebvre points out:

“Power - the state as will and representation - is exercised at the global level. As will, the power of the state and the people who hold this power are associated with a political strategy or

strategies. As representation, politicians have an ideologically justified political conception of space” (2003: 78).

Drawing on his experience in France, Lefebvre stresses on two focal strategies that are being developed within a capitalist society - i.e. neoliberalism and neo-dirigisme (Lefebvre, 2003: 78). However, in the case of Iran, we must substitute them with Islamification as a chief thrust of post-revolutionary dynamisms, at least in the first decade of the 1979 revolution. Accordingly, the space of resistance in Iran is defined as the space that, in one way or another, interrupts the imposed power, in both forms of will and representation, making their own spatiality. Therefore, the resistance takes on varied appearances from very drastic confrontation with revolutionary forces, as is the case for quasi-guerrilla warfare of anti-government parties, to more peaceful resistance of everyday life.

Before we go any further, it seems necessary to me to deal with the current discourse evolving around the notion of power. It is worth pausing just to clarify the relation between the notion of power employed in this research and the entangled concept of power that has been developing over the past decade particularly in the discipline of geography (Sharp, 2000). It seems that there are at least two main reasons why geographers seek to reconstitute the meaning of power as is signified in the concept of entanglements of power. In this regard, the first ground is to release power from its dominating connotation by distinguishing between dominating power and the power of resistance. Seen in this way, power is understood as “having both positive and negative dimensions, operation in ways which can be repressive and progressive, constraining and facilitative, to be condemned and to be celebrated” (Sharp, 2000: 2). Breaking down the components of power, it opens up a new horizon for political subjects not only to react upon the imposing power but also to exploit power positively as an effective tool to resist. In other

words, entanglements of power make up a continuum “running between two idealised poles which might be characterised as *resistance in domination* and *domination in resistance*” (Sharp, 2000: 21). This first notion leads us to the second logic of entangled power which is founded upon a critique of totalising power. Massey shows how political thought, from Levi-Strauss and structural Marxism to De Certeau and Laclau, is tangled up with a particular notion of power as coherent totalising structure that, at its very root, presupposes a big central block of power - the system (Massey in Sharp et al., 2000). Massey holds that what follows from this conception of power is, on the one hand, the identification of space with system that carries the character of “the fixed, the dead” and, on the other hand, characterisation of time as disjunctive and disruptive (Ibid: 282). Hence is the emancipatory role of the temporal and the policing feature of the spatial in politics.

While the idea of entanglements of power seeks to politicise the spatial through stripping the space off its structural connotation, the power, in my work, seen through the Hegelian lens is taken as a self-generating whole system if you like, which is under incessant process of becoming by means of the dialectic of the universal and the particular. Against this background, to attribute a structural quality to the spatial does not necessarily result in space being dead or fixed. Quite the contrary, a self-generating system has the potential to open up new possibilities in front of its particularities. In this view, there is no place outside the hegemonic and dominating whole. Therefore, power in its various forms operates from within the system. However, believing in an immanent whole does neither necessarily mean that the political subjects are imprisoned in a no-way-out totalising system nor does it invoke that the only solution is within the realm of *durée*. In contrast, there are always cracks and fissures in the system which enable subjects to stand against it. It is through these cracks that particularities

are capable of radicalising the system. However, by radicalising the system, oppressed particularities still remain within the symbolic confines of the system. So, in order to bring an end to the system one more move is necessary; “the system has to die twice” (Žižek, 1999: 73). This second move is the well-known negation of the negation in Hegelian logic when the system is sublated (*Aufheben*) transcended to the next level.

Following this, there is a particular meaning of resistance that is used in this research. Here, resistance resembles a form of transgression. Defined so, resistance comes across where there is a given block of dominating power, that is the Islamic state, imposing a series of practices and ideologies. However, nor does it deny the power of resistance as well. But, whether the resisters are able to subvert the status quo or not is a matter of possibility and contingency. It depends on the power of rebellions to organise and mobilise their forces in order to radicalise the boundaries of the status quo and eventually to sublate it.

The last theoretical point to be mentioned here is the fluid nature of the notion of resistance. While a certain act might be seen as a resistance at one level, it could be but a practice of conformity with dominantly imposed power at another level. This is due to the heterogeneous nature of power that works in various forms and within different planes. In this case, we must talk of a network of power, including both intensifying and contradictory forces at the same time, flows and creeps into diverse spaces subjectifying the lives of inhabitants into its rules and terms. The post-revolutionary Tehran, for instance, has been, and still is, colonised at once by Islamic ideology at the national level and by global forces at the international level. So, while a certain transgressing act resists an imposing power on one level, it might actually be in tune with forces on another level. I will return to this contradictory characteristic of actions later.

Having clarified what I mean by power and resistance, now we can show their application for the post-revolutionary Tehran. Tracing the space of resistance in the first decade of the revolution, two indicators have been employed by means of which a classification of resistance is laid out. The first indicator is associated with the nature of resistance. It denotes whether there is a collective consciousness behind the acts of individuals or whether the actions of these atomised people are driven by a type of individualistic purpose. In other words, the collective/individual indicator, in tune with Durkheimian resonance of the concept of collective consciousness, signifies the existence of common ends through which a sense of solidarity is created between participants (Durkheim, 1984). Furthermore, it frames the resistance as either a conscious strategy targeting the political regime or an atomised activity with the lowest level of organisation seeking to meet privately individual needs.

The second element signifies the spatiality of resistance. Touching upon the space/place of resistance, it represents whether city dwellers resist in Arbab<sup>7</sup> space or in Ra'yaat<sup>8</sup> space. It might be argued that while the resistance is formed in the context of Arbab/Ra'yaat binary, the confrontation must occur within the domain of Arbab space where both sides are active and participate. This line of argument forgets that in the Iranian context power does not work within the frame of public/private space as if governmental surveillance limits itself to the boundaries of public space. In contrast, in the Iranian state, Arbab does not leave the space of Ra'yaat untouched. In several cases, the authority has broken into private houses in order to suppress any signs of transgression. Therefore, Ra'yaat space has become the loci of transgression of the

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<sup>7</sup> Arbab space is an Iranian equivalence of public space. In Chapter 4, the reason why we must prevent using public/private space in Iranian context is explained.

<sup>8</sup> Ra'yaat space is an Iranian equivalence of private space.



oppressed who wants to make their own lifestyle in a way that does not conform to the imposed Islamic code of behavior.

Having described the two axes, namely individual/collective action and Arbab/Ra'yaat space, within which resistance is framed, I now wish to present a typology of resistance in contemporary Tehran. In this regard, six types of resistance are distinguished. The first one occurred at the end of Shah reign when ten thousand dissidents went to the streets to show their dissatisfaction with the authoritarian orientation of Mohammad Reza Shah. Through this mass movement, Arbab space was occupied by rebels whose common aim was to topple the monarchy. The second is the movement of the urban marginalised whose socio-economic status did not allow them to settle in the centre of Tehran. It will be shown how daily activities of these atomised and isolated subjects became a source of power breaking the authority of state apparatus. Then comes women protesting in the wake of the Islamic revolution as the third type of resistance. Touching on the hijab problem, I shall discuss how imposing ideology, compulsory hijab, sets the foundation for making a common identity among the oppressed, that is women. The practice of political parties composes the fourth type of resistance. Placing themselves against the established post-revolutionary state, oppositions sought to achieve their share in filling the power vacuum created after the downfall of the former regime. The next resistant practice lies in the everyday life of those strata of society whose lifestyles did not match the officially advertised values of the Islamic government. While political parties turn Arbab space into a battle ground, prohibited lifestyle transforms their own private houses into a place of transgression. Through this transgression, Ra'yaat space is turned into the loci of banned desires. Throughout the first decade of the revolution, all signs of festivities such as throwing party, dancing, having wine, listening to Western music, and so on were purged from

Arbab space and confined to Ra'yaat space. By the end of Iran-Iraq war, there was a significant shift in policy-making and subsequently in the meaning of Arbab/Ra'yaat space. Neoliberal way of governance became the only solution for recession and stagnation. What followed was the proliferation of the discourse of participation and citizenship. But, the real meaning of participation was nothing than participation of private investments in land speculation of Tehran. As the result, as I discuss in more detail in chapter 5, the gap between centre and periphery widened. This, in turn, led to the dissatisfaction of poor people who geographically settled in the periphery of Tehran. In the early 1990s, peripheral settlements of Iran in general and Tehran in particular were the scene of the violent uprising.

Following this, we can draw a grid to map out the different forms of resistance.

**Table 1-1: Types of resistance**

|                                    | <b>Period</b>         | <b>Nature of resistance</b> | <b>Space of resistance</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Revolutionary demonstration</b> | Before the revolution | Collective                  | Arbab space                |
| <b>Marginalised group</b>          | Revolutionary period  | Individual                  | Arbab space                |
| <b>Women protest</b>               | Revolutionary period  | Collective                  | Arbab space                |
| <b>Political parties</b>           | Revolutionary period  | Collective                  | Arbab space                |
| <b>Underground lifestyle</b>       | After the revolution  | Individual                  | Ra'yaat space              |
| <b>Rebellion periphery</b>         | Neoliberal turn       | Collective                  | Arbab space                |

# **Chapter 2:**

# **Methodology**

## **2-1- Introduction**

While beginning my PhD and getting involved in Lefebvre's writing, then, I realised how differently one can be confronted with the issue of methodology. In each of his works, while Lefebvre elaborates on complicated and sophisticated topics, he brings the issue of methodology to the fore as if the theoretical works are inseparable from methodological ones. Being interwoven, the issue of methodology is a part of theoretical contemplation for Lefebvre. It also has a tight bond with epistemological outlook. In other words, if we consider a certain phenomenon, say the urban, in a particular way, then there is a concomitant epistemology and methodology. In fact, it is the cohesion and consistency of methodology, theoretical, and empirical study altogether that make one's work valid.

Against this background, here I would like to draw our attention to the methodology that I have employed to make distinct chapters as a consistent whole. As a Lefebvrian project, this thesis has had no goal other than proposing a unitary picture of the contemporary flux of the production of Iranian space. To achieve this, I had to rely on those methods that enable us to study at once statics and dynamics, trends and realisation, and mutation and crystallisation of urban phenomena. Hence is the chronological order of the chapters of this thesis. However, this time-line historiography does not mean that there is a rather linear, or worth evolutionary, story of contemporary Tehran. Quite the contrary, it entails epochal reading of various periods each of which is articulated by varied concepts and configured by diverse forces. Owing to Marx's method of political economy this approach necessitates a shift "from a progressive or sequential or evolutionary historicism to what we might call 'the history of epochs and modes': a structural history...interrupts the linear trajectory of an evolutionary progression, and reorganizes our conception of historical time in term of the succession of modes of production, defined by the

internal relations of dominance and subordination between the different relations which constitute them” (Hall, 2003: 133).

Each of these epochs, as a distinct yet not separated whole, should not be considered as a given, a prior reality. On the other hand, they are constructed objects articulated through ideas and discourses as well as practices. Along with historical transformation, the validity of such an object depends on the way in which it is consistently constituted in both methodological and theoretical domains. Dealing with the constructed whole, therefore, it calls for a certain method of research that is in accordance with theoretical imperatives. To do so, I have employed dialectical methodology as my methodological approach to construct the city of Tehran as a theoretical object of study.

## **2-2- The concern over totality**

In comparison to the well-known founders of sociology, namely Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, Fredric Le Play is quite unknown. Living in the same period as Durkheim, he was among the first pioneers of social science to publish a journal, *La Science Sociale*, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Savage and Warde (1993) believe that the short-term influence of Le Play on sociology was more than those of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx. Preoccupied with the interrelationship of family budgets, the means of obtaining subsistence, and the nature of the environment, Le Play considered sociology as a science of ‘place, work, and family’ (Holt-Jense, 2009). Le Play, in fact, founded a tradition of urban research whose key concern was “the nature of urban life and the analysis of what might loosely be termed ‘urban problems - unemployment, poverty, social unrest, rootlessness, congestion and so forth’” (Savage & Warde, 1993: 9). Throughout its

development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this tradition, despite its all modifications and transformations, kept its core themes and concerns. During this period urban studies institutionalised in the form of The Chicago School and Sociological Society in America and Britain respectively. The dominant attitude of these institutions toward the environment, however, saw it as a simple receptacle conditioning human action and privileging one sort of behaviour over all others. Hence, they never got theoretically involved with the urban as a category on an epistemological terrain.

Fired up by Althusser, it is a rather familiar controversy as to whether the urban can be an object of study at all. Distinguishing between science and ideology, in the era of Althusser's domination, it was believed that each discipline must have its own 'theoretical object' founded on particular concepts that, rather than being taken for granted, are scientifically defined through theoretical practice. This, on the other hand, was the very reason that urban sociology as a distinct field of research lost its leading role within the broader fields of sociology since it was not able to find and define its particular theoretical object (Savage, 2005: 360). Here, I do not mean to go through critiques of the structuralist essence of Althusserian standpoint. For the current work, as it is faithful to the imperative of Lefebvre's theory, it will suffice to mention that the process of departmentalisation of the object of study, which has now resulted in taken-for-granted firmly separated disciplines, is the very core of Lefebvre's critique of fragmented sciences. Lefebvre believes that at a certain point in history the urban problematic becomes global. He adds:

"Every specialized science cuts from the global phenomenon a "field" or "domain", which it illuminates it in its own way...Moreover, each individual science is further fragmented into specialized subdisciplines. Sociology is divided into political sociology, economic sociology,

rural and urban sociology, and so forth. The fragmented and specialized sciences operate analytically... In terms of the urban phenomenon considered as a whole, geography, demography, history, psychology, and sociology supply the results of an analytical procedure” (2003:48).

These specialised sciences are based on descriptive methods, Lefebvre adds. They examine their object according to the law of enumeration revealing the enormity and complexity of the urban. Today, the result of this specialisation is self-evident. We are confronted with various departments of knowledge of space each of which wavers between description and dissection waiting to divide up their tasks, and to perform them with the help of concepts or pseudo-concepts ...which were an effective means for classifying and counting and mentally pigeonholing ‘things’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 89, 91).

As Merrifield highlights, Lefebvre’s critiques of pigeonholing things in space stems from Marx’s well-known notion of “the fetishism of commodities” (Merrifield, 2006: 106) in which commodities were seen in isolation detached from productive relations underlying their manufacturing:

“Instead of uncovering the social relationships (including class relationships) that are latent in spaces, instead of concentrating our attention on the production of space and the social relationships inherent to it- relationships which introduces specific contradictions into production, so echoing the contradiction between private ownership of the means of production and the social character of the productive forces- we fall into the trap of treating space “in itself”, as space as such. We come to think in terms of spatiality, and so fetishize space in a way reminiscent of the old fetishism of commodities, where the trap lay in exchange, and the error was to consider “things” in isolation, as “things in themselves”” (Lefebvre, 1991:90).



Against this background, Lefebvre believes, the urban phenomenon, taken as a whole, cannot be grasped by any specialised science. Even if we assume as a methodological principle that no science can turn its back on itself but that each specialisation must maximise the use of its own resources to comprehend the global phenomenon, none of these sciences can claim to exhaust it (2003: 53).

So, what is at stake is not the matter of addressing and enumerating more details. Quite the contrary, counting and pigeonholing data has not much to do with constructing the urban as totality. Totalising on the other hand, more than being a result of 'empirical' study is a fruit of theoretical involvement with the subject so as to constitute it as a coherent whole. This is what Lefebvre did to the urban from the mid-1960s onward which is more like, to use Lefebvre's himself language, an oeuvre, a work of art. In the next section I plan to show how the urban has risen to the level of a new episteme representing itself as an epistemological tool.

### **2-3- Epistemological concern**

This methodological imperative cries out for a twofold epistemological shift. First we should abandon phenomenology, which interrogates the relationship between urban inhabitants and a landscape, for analysis and logic for dialectics (Lefebvre, 2003: 47). Therefore, unlike fragmentary science which seeks to demarcate their objects within a specific space, a dialectical research ought to discern contradiction within differential space. For, as Lefebvre mentions, urban society is not an empirical fact, but a possible object. It is a conceptual construct, an intellectual outlook toward a possible object, a movement of thought toward a certain concrete. While virtual, it is also real in that the possible is also part of the real and gives it a sense of

direction, an orientation, a clear path to the horizon (Lefebvre, 2003: 45). This novel articulation of the urban necessitates a dialectical method if one is to grasp growth and development of the virtual object; the possible in its totality. In the next section I shall deal with the dialectical methodology of Lefebvre in more detail. But, here, I would like to elaborate on the other line of epistemological shift.

The second line of the epistemological shift denotes a move from the industrial to the urban. In Lefebvre's philosophy of history, by the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century history had entered into a new epoch propelled by massive urbanisation. Although it is not a finished process, since then the urban has become a predominant element in determining other sectors of society. The industrial, once, had been the locus of concentration and constitutive factors, on the other hand, has been subordinated to the requirement of the urban. In other words, if in the Marx's era it was the industrial with all its disciplines focusing on capital and labour, classes and reproduction that constituted the episteme (the possibility of knowing the social formation), now it is the urban and its forms focused on everydayness and consumption, planning and spectacle, that expose the tendencies of social development (Prigge, 2008: 49).

This notion reminds us of Marx's complicated methodology which was explicated in the introduction to *Grundrisse*. While criticising the method of political economy, Marx subtly designs his architecture of dialectical methodology. Drawing on the example of money, he shows how it exists in different societies with varied temporalities and spatialities. Taken as a whole, each of these societies encompasses various social relations, some of which are dominated and others are subordinated. In this case, money has had a historical existence from primitive societies to more developed ones that is bourgeois capitalism. In his historical journey, however, money rested on a different set of relationships. Within a simple society it, perhaps,

lived in the form of wealth, whereas in the developed society it is given the form of capital. Therefore, Marx noted, “the simpler category can express the dominant relations of a less developed whole, or else those subordinate relations of a more developed whole which already had a historic existence before this whole developed in the direction expressed by a more concrete category” (Marx, 1973: 102).

I would like to emphasize that for Marx the conceptual life of a category e.g. money is distinct from its historical life. As Hall explains, “If a concept is, historically, relatively undeveloped (*simple*) our concept (of it) will be *abstract*. At this level, a connection of a fairly reflexive kind *does* exist between the (simple) level of historical development of the relation and the relative (lack of) concreteness of the category which appropriates it” (Hall, 2003: 133).

One, also, must notice that Marx’s dialectic of history-theory does not have a linear, evolutionary trajectory. No straight, unbroken path exists from simple to more complex development, either in thought or history. So, it is possible for a certain relationship to move from a dominant to a subordinate position within a social whole (Hall, 2003). This conceptual delicacy in articulating the relationship within a social whole permits Marx’s dialectical method to screen away a sequential understanding of history and replace it with a “history of epochs: a structural history” (Hall, 2003). Each epoch is distinct from previous ones by means of its constituent elements and their attendant relationships.

As an original Marxian thinker, Lefebvre’s epistemological shift must be read through this epochal analysis. The industrial era, with its all constituent elements and relations, is substituted with the urban epoch. Lefebvre’s most significant achievement was to explicate and expand the thought and practice of this emerging state of affairs. “The urban problematic becomes a global

phenomenon. Can urban reality be defined as a ‘superstructure’ on the surface of the economic structure? The simple result of growth and productive forces? Simply a modest marginal reality compared with production?”, he asked (2003: 15). His answer is negative. The emergence of urban reality, albeit as a virtual object rather than an actual and realised one, demands a new set of questions, concepts, and theories since it “modifies the relations of production”. Space and the politics of space, Lefebvre holds, “express” social relationships but react against them (Lefebvre, 2003: 15). In *The urban revolution* this transition is revealed under the name of ‘critical point’ where “industrialization, the dominant power and limiting factor, becomes a dominated reality during periods of profound crisis. This results in tremendous confusion, during which the past and the possible, the best and the worst, become intertwined” (2003: 16).

Dealing with the urban society theoretically, we should keep in mind that the replacement of the industrial with the urban does not imply withering away of the former. But, the industrial, from then on, has had to work within a new assemblage. Therefore, industrial relations, with its associated concepts such as capital, labour, production, value, class, etc. have been subordinated to the elements of the urban society. The ‘law of intertwinement of social spaces’ expresses this notion: “social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another” (Lefebvre, 1991: 86). While it is brought up against the background of synchronic geographies to disclose the relationship between different geographical levels, local, regional, national, and worldwide, it also applies to the historical times incorporating the relationship of various epochs. Therefore, the concern about production taken in the usual sense of the word, e.g. production of goods and commodities that once constituted the underlying element of the industrial period needs to be replaced with a concern over space.

“The problematic of space, which subsumes the problems of the urban sphere (the city and its extensions) and of everyday life (programmed consumption), has displaced the problematic of industrialization. It has not, however, destroyed that earlier set of problems: the social relationships that obtained previously still obtain; the new problem is, precisely, the problem of their *reproduction*” (Lefebvre, 1991:89)

This epistemological consideration theoretically legitimises the urban as an object of study. Taken as a whole, in totality, Tehran seems to have the potential to be a locus of concentration of concepts, theories, and determinations. This potentiality, virtuality to be more precise, can be true only by means of practice; a practice that encompasses at once the work of thought and action. “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice”, Marx holds in his second thesis on Feuerbach (Marx, 1884).

The current work, therefore, more than a speculative, theoretical attempt, is a practice not only to reflect but also to reconstruct the urban in general and Tehran in particular. To do so, however, there is yet another step to take to reach the end of methodological path. This last step is a methodological reflection on the relationship between the urban, as a universal category, and Tehran, as a particular moment of this universality. In other words, it denotes the dialectics of the universal and the particular.

#### **2-4- The concretisation of the urban**

Of paramount importance is the moment of concretisation of the urban. The urban has doubtless become a key signifier in the different faculties of urban studies. This qualification, however,

runs the risk that the urban could become entangled in the thread of power both in the national and international spheres. On the national terrain, control of factories has been replaced by 24/7 surveillance over streets and public spaces. On the international terrain, also, cities have been, and still are, entangled in the universal conception which seeks to define them as destinations of fluid capital and centres of realisation of surplus value. So, what threatens the urban is the universal conception of it which is indifferent to the historical and empirical variations. As an abstraction, universal abstraction needs to be concretised. The abstraction, then, is required to be mediated by an incessant process of introduction of determination into it. The result of this process is what Lefebvre calls 'concrete abstraction'; an abstract that becomes true in practice.

Reflection on this subject demands a crucial distinction between the 'empirically-given' and the concrete. For Lefebvre, as for Marx, what is empirically given is not the same as the concrete. These two have different modes of appreciation and development. The former develops through the course of history, whereas the latter grows theoretically in the mind. In *The method of political economy*, Marx, once again, applies his dialectical method at once on historical and thought entity. What is concrete-in-history, Marx emphasises, is not necessarily concrete-in-thought. Drawing on the example of population, he expresses the opinion that what appears concrete at the beginning is nothing more than a chaotic concept. In order for population to be concrete it needs to be mediated by further determinations such as the classes of which it is composed. "These classes in turn", Marx adds, "are an empty phrase if I am not familiar with the elements on which they rest e.g. wage labour, prices, etc" (Marx, 1973: 100). According to Marx, we must go deeper to arrive at the simplest determinations. "From there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again" (Marx, 1973: 100). As a result of this going back and forth, the abstract concept of population transforms into a

“rich totality of many determinations and relations” (Ibid). So, what at first merely manifestly existed, now has turned into the complex concrete. This method clearly reveals that what is at work is the practice of ‘thought’ to reproduce a concrete concept. This notion is of crucial importance so that one must distinguish it from the usual conception of concrete. Concrete, in the conventional sense of the word, refers to the process of actualisation of an idea or a concept on the ground. Following this, the Marxian ‘praxis’ is understood merely as a work of material and bodily action (cf. Stanek, 2008). Hence, the confusion of mode of thought and mode of history. To prevent this confusion, one must reconstruct the determinations which constitute the concept in the ‘mind’. It is only then that we can ‘think’ of the real, concrete historical complexity (Hall, 2003). Hall elaborates on this process as follows:

“This clarification is a specific practice which theory is required to perform upon history: Thought accomplishes such a clarification by decomposing simple, unified categories into the real, contradictory, antagonistic relations which compose them. It penetrates what ‘is immediately present on the surface of bourgeois society” (Hall, 2003:129)

While introducing determination to certain categories, say the urban, what is at work is the reconciliation of the real with the ideal. This process has a dialectical characteristic. Since any determination is rooted in the social, economic, cultural, and political relationships of a historical society, the work of imposing them into a category means that the concept, while keeping its universal characteristics, is turning into a new universality. In other words, introducing determination to a concept assumes the generalisation of the particular to the universal. Furthermore, it presupposes a critical delving into the locality in order to attribute determinations to the global.

As has been mentioned before, the urban for Lefebvre is a global phenomenon. As far as this study is concerned, the application of these methodological imperatives to the urban necessitates a reciprocal relationship between the concept of urban and the reality of it in the context of Tehran. The urban as a universal category needs to go through certain determinations to become concrete. It is only in this way that Tehran as a distinct, particular form of a city can contribute to the universal conception of the urban. In so doing, I have tried to take into consideration the specificity of Tehran. Therefore, it seems crucial to speak of three domains of determinacy namely the economy, ideology, and everyday life as key roles in determining the space of Tehran. Economic processes and everyday life are already acknowledged as Lefebvre's persistent themes in his preoccupation with urban reality.

Ideology, also, is an omnipresent term in Lefebvre's analysis, but in a relative form of urbanism; as an urban ideology that permeates into two various terrains, that is spatial practices and urban representation. Whereas Lefebvre more often speaks of ideology in the Marxian sense of the word conveying false consciousness of the urban, here in this research, along with the aforementioned deployment of ideology, it is embodied in the form of religion. This is the very structural variation of the urban that distinguishes the city of Tehran from its European counterparts. The role Islam has been, and still is, playing in the production of space is not to be found in other cities with a Christian tradition. Especially since the 1979 revolution, Islam as an ideology, and not as a false consciousness, has become a constitutive element of Tehran. Therefore, each chapter of this study consists of three main sections on ideology, political economy, and everyday life. As a conceptual category, everyday life encompasses rather broad range of activities and lived experiences within varied geographies of Tehran. This wideness, however, makes it impossible for a single study to represent the totality of everyday life. In this



research, hence, the study of everyday life is confined to the examination of rebellion actions that seek to confront to the relations of power whether generate from Islamic ideology or economic sources. This rebellion actions have been categorised, here, as spaces of resistance.

Against this background, ideology along with political economy and everyday life are considered as three determinations of the urban in the context of Tehran. The main presupposition here is that if the urban is read through these determinations the result would be a holistic understanding of the urban; its totality. It is not to be claimed that going thorough these three domains of determinacy the urban is exhausted. There will be, of course, other aspects yet to be explored, to give the urban further meaning. But, that would be the subject of another study. The urban, like any other concept, can never be exhausted through a single examination or conception. On the contrary, it is subjected to the ceaseless process of becoming both in terms of conceptualisation and materialisation.

There is another concern to be mentioned here. These three domains also correspond to Lefebvre's analysis of level, that is Global, Mediator, and Private, albeit with one modification. Drawing on Lefebvre's analysis of level, in what follows, I shall show its strengths and limits in the context of Tehran.

## **2-5- The problematic of geographical scale**

In his illuminating article, Brenner (2000:367) shows the extent to which the urban question in general, and Anglophonic articulation of it in particular, have been confined to relatively limited and fixed receptions of geographical scale. He argues that, until quite recently, the lack of speculative practices to conceptualise geographical scale had led to a specific understanding of

“socioterritorial processes (e.g. localization, urbanization, regionalization, globalization etc.) as static entities frozen within geographical space. Relatedly, existing scalar vocabularies are poorly equipped to grasp the complex, perpetually changing historical interconnections and interdependencies among geographical scales”. This hierarchisation of geographical scales coupled with academic division of labour has resulted in the establishment and consolidation of fragmentary sciences e.g. urban studies, regional planning, international relations and so on, at the expense of a unitary theory of space. Empowered by Lefebvre’s analysis of level, here, I would like to propose a methodological alternative to this entrenched departmentalisation of geographical scale.

Having Lefebvre’s views in mind, my reception of his theory of level goes through a critical point of view mediated by the specificity of Tehran. In *The explosion* Lefebvre characterises historical materialism with two interrelated dialectical movements; vertical and horizontal. While the former denotes the historical development of society, the latter casts light on the synchronic structure of it (Lefebvre, 1969). Looking at the present-day society, Lefebvre constructs this synchronic structure by distinguishing three levels namely a global, an intermediary, and a private level which in turn refer to worldwide power, the urban, and the everyday life of inhabitants respectively. The global level, that of society, is regulated “by large and powerful institutions (Church and State), by a large code formalized or not, by a culture and significant ensembles endowed with powers” (Lefebvre, 1996: 101). The global level, which is sometimes given the name of far order, projects itself onto the practico-material reality of the intermediary level. Then, comes the private level which contains relations of individuals in groups of variable size, more or less organised and structured and the relations of these groups among themselves (Ibid). Furthermore, it accommodates habiting that includes diversity of

ways of living and values associated with the modalities and modulations of everyday life (Lefebvre, 2003: 81). In Lefebvre's analytical thought, intermediary is specifically urban level where the global with its forces such as the state, global power and knowledge, institutions, and ideology are confronted with the habiting. In other words, the urban is situated at an interface, halfway between the global and the private level. However, far from being a passive outcome of each of these levels, the urban simultaneously affects and is affected by them. Whenever the global attempts to absorb particularities, the middle level comes into play: it is a terrain suitable for defence or attack, for struggle (Lefebvre, 2003: 89).

This synchronic picture of the social whole, as a methodological tool, must be read against the fragmentation of specialised sciences each of which cut through society based on the analytical logic of scale picking its own piece to articulate and legitimise its domain of expertise. Lefebvre, on the other hand, sought to constitute a unitary understanding of it. To do so, he introduces with the law of intertwinement of social spaces. "Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another" (Lefebvre, 1991: 86). Therefore, Lefebvre holds, "no space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local" (1991: 86).

To sum up, if in the diachronic development of society it is the economic variables such as forces of production that govern the law of dialectical movement (Lefebvre, 1969), the synchronic development of society is propelled by dialectical interpenetration of levels.

One, however, allows raising a question on the universality of this synchronic development of society. Does this law with its terms and practices apply to other geographies? Can we analytically generalise it to different time-space? The answer is negative. Not only there must

be a modification, but also transformation for a universal law. Otherwise it would be rather an abstraction repressing particularities. To be concrete it must be mediated through determinations which are specific to the particular time and space. In other words, the universal is a historic signifier that is subjected to a continuous tension between various, sometimes conflicting sometimes comforting, signifieds. In this sense, Tehran is not simply a “variation of the same basic form” of city (Roy, 2015) as if laws that apply to, for instance, western cities apply to Tehran, just with a simple modification. On the contrary, there is a fundamental difference between Tehran, on the one hand, and western cities on which experience Lefebvre founds his theory of level, on the other hand. The difference comes when we take into consideration diverse forces at work on different hierarchical scales. While Lefebvre’s theory of level does in fact consist of three scales, namely the private, the urban, and the global, we must add another scale by dividing the global into national and international if we are to understand the development of Tehran. This separation between national and international is particularly essential due to the position Tehran has occupied within a worldwide perspective.

There is massive and rich literature on world differentiation from classical studies of dependency theory and uneven development to more recent ones focusing on the so-called global city. What they all share is to presuppose the existence of a hierarchy of a sort. Within this hierarchy flow relationships of power whether it be in the form of knowledge, representation or will and institution. Whereas western cities, those who are represented by varied names such as first world, developed countries, global north, and so forth, are the centre of governing and subsequently imposing power, other cities at the bottom of the hierarchy, including Tehran, are governed and imposed upon. As far as Tehran is concerned, particularly following the Islamic revolution of 1979, this resulted in consolidation of a reactionary power

at the national level to oppose what was imposed at the international level. So, when Lefebvre sheds light on global power which is embodied in the shape of society regulated by large and powerful institutions (Church and State) (Lefebvre, 1996), he is still thinking on the national level as a constitutive level. But, what is national for cities of France is international for Tehran. Consequently, there is a national front which fights back against this international power. The emergence of Islamification as a negation of global forces must be read against this background. Dealing with Lefebvre's conception of levels, therefore, one must recognise and distinguish between four varied levels including the international, the national, the urban, and the private to grasp the particularity of Tehran. It is also in this way that the idea of level is given a concrete meaning.

At the heart of this study, therefore, is the interplay of these levels. One should be careful while touching upon varied forces working on different levels not to treat them as 'things' which have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours. As is mentioned before, these levels function based on the principle of the superimposition of spaces. They interfere and interpenetrate with one another. In other words, the space of global forces, for instance, interferes with the national and interpenetrates the private. As a result of this interference and interpenetration none of the spaces in question wither away or are destroyed. This incessant conflict between spaces of diverse levels ultimately unfolds itself on the urban terrain. However, the urban does not just act as an empty container that expresses spaces of other levels. It also actively interacts with them enhancing some of them, whilst hindering the others. My effort was directed to reveal the interaction of these various forces by constituting and reconstructing dialectical relationships between them. In this regard, this work can be understood in two different ways; firstly, each chapter can be read separately to grasp the

synchronic dynamic of each epoch. Second, it could be read through inter-chapter to grasp the diachronic development of the contemporary history of Tehran.

## **2-6- Operationalisation**

This study, as discussed before, is principally an epochal, but not chronological, reading of the historical transformation of Tehran. In this regard, it requires us to employ a methodology that provides us with tools to construct an ever-evolving epochal whole. In the previous section, it was argued that only dialectical methodology is able to capture the movement of a socio-spatial phenomenon along with its different parts which are intrinsically connected to each other and to the whole by virtue of the internal relations. In addition, the operationalisation of dialectical methodology in this study is implemented by an archival research method. The aim of this section is to present the execution of this archival documentation. It should be mentioned, at the beginning, that the subject of this study, Tehran, requires me to delve into Persian literature. In the lack of sufficient Anglophonic studies, therefore, the main body of this archival study was composed of Persian documents and data.

As the research progressed, I referred to various sources of information from archival documents, bureau censuses, ministries' statistics, parliament and state legislations and laws to newspapers, periodic journals, and previous researches in order to collect data. These data set a basis to reconstitute and rearticulate each period of Tehran transformation. I purposefully speak of rearticulation since prior to my research these data articulated and constructed a different historiography; ones which often describe a linear modernist history of the city. Inspired by Lefebvre, I, on the other hand, had a dialectical movement as a guide to the research. Therefore, I attempted to apply these data in a way to construct a new configuration of the process of

production of space. In this regard, far from giving a descriptive explanation of the history of Tehran, the data was collected to analyse a dialectical process of the production of space. In other words, these data were linked together and rearticulated to constitute a rather novel assemblage based on the requirement of the research methodology. So, as an epochal reading of the historical development of Tehran, data had to be collected to represent at once interconnectedness and the uniqueness of each period.

Accordingly, the process of data collection was confined to three periods - i.e. pre-revolutionary Tehran, post-revolutionary Tehran, and neoliberal turn of Tehran. Based on its constitutive elements, each period, in turn, consisted of three moments - i.e. political economy, Islamification, and space of resistance. It must be noted that in the first period, rather than Islamification, we have the incorporation of Tehran into a global order as the dominant force. This integration, as is shown in the following chapter, runs counter to Islamification. In fact, Islamification was a reaction to the proliferation of Western material and culture in the pre-revolutionary period. So, in this period the mechanism of incorporation of Tehran was at the centre of data-gathering. Altogether, the process of data collection was a nine-step work which comprised of three periods each of which included three moments. In what follows I have shown the material and sources on which the main body of arguments of each chapter rests.

Having set the plan of my thesis, I began with having interviews with elites. This encompassed 10 semi-structured interviews with those who had in one way or another worked through urban issues of Tehran including former state officials, lecturers, researchers, urban developers, and financiers. Rather than being a direct source of reference, these interviews had an intermediary role in the process of data extraction. In this sense, these interviews helped me to clarify the path of my research and guided me to the relevant events, state projects, laws, and other sources.

Following this, the data collection went through rather chronological sequences beginning with pre-revolutionary and ending with the neo-liberal turn of Tehran. Throughout the research, however, there were several occasions that made me go back and forth to complete or revise each chapter in the light of new data.

The chapter on pre-revolutionary Tehran starts with an elaboration of historical Tehran and its initial integration into the global order. To do so, I drew on travel literature such as Jaubert (1821) and Morier, (1812) on a few occasions where there were no other documents available. Apart from that, the main body of data was collected by documentary analysis including previous researches, studies, theses, and discussion papers. My arguments on foreign trade and political interaction with the West were based on the abovementioned sources. Furthermore, international treaties and agreements were taken into consideration as another source of data-gathering. In terms of political economy, in addition to those already-mentioned sources, official statistics and censuses were involved in constituting my arguments. This includes an archival analysis of documents of various state departments from the Centre of Research of the Parliament, Tehran Urban Research and Planning Centre. The same sources of information were used to reinforce my argument on resistance. Moreover, periodic journals and newspapers were reviewed to give a more accurate picture of resistance.

In the next two chapters, the War Period and the neoliberal turn, the process of data collection followed a quite similar path as the previous one. The arguments on political economy with its two dimensions, namely the level of legislation and the level of materialisation, have been articulated by means of archival study drawing on the constitution of the Islamic Republic of



Iran, Majles<sup>9</sup> reports, Central Bank reports, urban research projects, and so on. The only difference was a new section on Islamification in which the chapter is enhanced by a few visual documents such as photographs, graffiti, and maps. They are mainly extracted from documents that are held in the National Iranian Library.

The main difficulty came across when I intended to collect data on the space of resistance. The problem was that those state departments who were in charge of controlling and policing the city, such as Law Enforcement Force of Islamic Republic of Iran and judicial System of Iran, were the ones to archive information about protests and demonstrations. In the normal circumstances, these types of information are considered as confidential. Given the fact that I was a student of an English university, there was no chance getting access to that information. Therefore, I had to refer to secondary sources including pervious academic researches, public reports, and periodic journals to extract date. In one case, I had a semi-structure interview with an eyewitness who had participated in one of the protest in the early period of the revolution. Although he gave me a very detailed information of the protest that he had participated in, I had no variable sources to compare his description with.

## **2-7- Limitations of research**

As is mentioned before, there is some research centred on the Iranian urban problem within Anglophonic literature. Even among Persian scholarship, the mode of involvement with the topic is rather different from what I had planned. Graduated from one of the well-known fragmentary sciences, Iranian scholars are engaged with the practico-material reality of the

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<sup>9</sup> Iranian parliament

urban rather than getting involved in the conceptual level. More than being attentive to the empirically-given dimension of Tehran, in this study, I have put my efforts on transcending this practico-material reality to a level of abstraction. In so doing, the main difficulty was the lack of relevant concepts and categories upon which a theoretical framework can be built. Furthermore, those concepts and categories prevailing among English language literature prove its insufficiency to represent the context of non-Western cities and leave the particularity of them unnoticed. Therefore, one of the main challenges of this work was to create new concepts and categories that, while exposing the specificity of Tehran, were capable of clarifying its relation to the Western categories. In other words, these new concepts should make it clear as to why and how they are going to modify the prior well-established concepts.

The idea of totality brings another limit to the fore. Despite its claim of totality, this research is not to be considered as an exhaustive examination of the city of Tehran. There are always fissures and cracks in representation which leave a space for further investigation. My study, like any other research, has produced its own residue. While there are so many areas to be touched upon to expose the work of politics, economy and Islamification, the main limitation rests on the representing everyday life. More than rebellion reactions which were my concern in this study, there are conforming actions within the everyday lives of inhabitants left untouched here. My intention in touching upon the space of resistance among other dimensions of everyday life was in accordance with the structure of the thesis. Having dialectics at the heart of the methodology, I sought to maintain and represent the dialectical nature of the process of the production of space. So, what was more legitimate than resisting actions to the hegemonic state Islamification and political economic processes? Once again, it does not mean that

everyday life is exhausted in rebellion behaviours. It was just a matter of the limitation of a single study and the intention of the author to bring this up and leave out others.

The last limitation of the research is related to the process of data collection. Having documentary analysis as the chief method of data-gathering, the accessibility to archives was crucial to my research. Taken as confidential, in many cases state departments did not permit me to get access to their archives. So, on several occasions I had to confine myself to the information gathered from more general sources such as newspapers, magazines, and bulletins since more reliable sources and accurate statistics were not available.

# **Chapter 3: Pre- Revolutionary Tehran**

## **The Incorporation of Tehran into Global Order**

### **3-1- Introduction**

In 1806, Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, talking to a French officer, Amédée Jaubert, posed a fundamental question which has profoundly changed the future of Iran ever since. Witnessing the superiority of Russian troops over Iranian artillery, he asked why we have lagged behind (Jaubert, 1821). This question posited a specific order of things that, when coupled with the expanding global capitalism at the time, placed Iran within a new context and set of relations which ultimately changed the fate of Iran. In this chapter, I intend to explore this transformation and its consequences for the city of Tehran in general and the land problematic in particular. In doing so, I will first reflect on the causes and background that endowed Iran with a new form and function in a global context. Here, in keeping with Lefebvre, Tehran will be suggested to play an intermediary role where the global and the local (the universal and the particular in Hegelian language) interweave. Then, the way in which this interpenetration of the global and the local affects at once urban consciousness and urban practices will be dealt with. Consequently, the emergence of a new spatiality and meaning of land which resulted from this new situation will be touched upon. At the end, I wish to show the implication of new condition for the region of Tehran. In this respect, my discussion evolves around 4 topics: urbanisation, the proliferation of wage labour, emerging classes, and the expanse of satellite cities.

### **3-2- The incorporation of Iran into the global order**

The story of invasion of the West to the rest of the world, from Latin America and Africa to the Middle East and Asia, and making them as their own colonies has become a cliché. Here,

I wish to set it on a new foundation and present a dialectical narrative of this invasion by means the contemporary history of Iran.

In *the Philosophy of History* Hegel contends that “with the Persian Empire (550-330 BC) we first enter on continuous History. The Persians are the first Historical People” (2001: 191). Being an autonomous entity, History in Hegel’s philosophical mind, is a progressive path of reason from its primary form, that is consciousness, to the most complex one, namely absolute knowledge. Given the fact that in Lefebvre’s philosophy of history the trajectory of history begins with the advent of the political city (cf. Lefebvre, 2003), Perhaps Lefebvre had followed Hegel in saying that “oriental city was essentially political” (1996: 65). However, Hegel believes, this Persian Empire makes a real transition in the history of the world (Hegel, 2004). Later on, in its dialectical development, History moved from Persia, and left her ahistorical, to flourish in the rich soil of Europe. Apparently, it took some 2,500 years for History to come back to Persia again. But, this returning History was essentially different from its former. In order to make a universal History, it tried to sprawl to other geographies so that it could incorporate other spaces and subject them into its term. Although Hegel’s *philosophy of history* is clearly biased by presenting a ‘universal narrative’ and is subjected to a postcolonial critique, his *dialectical logic* of totality, enriched with dialectic of the universal and the particular, enhances us to understand the transformation of a locality, Iran in this case, in relation to global forces. It is in this way that we can explain how universalisation has changed, and is changing, both the urban practices and urban consciousness of Iran. Before we go any further to explain this transformation, it seems necessary to present the background against which Iran, the particular, was incorporated into the History, the universal, and became a peripheral node in the global order.

Dealing with this process, we must take into consideration the political impetus that went hand in hand with the economic one. The Russo-Persian wars in the early 19th Century must be marked as a prelude to the projection of Western ideologies and institutions or far order, as Lefebvre calls them, onto the space of Iran, namely near order. Following this was a series of travels of foreign military officers to Iran aiming at refreshing the Iranian troops and army. So, Sir John Malcolm, a representative of the East India Company, was sent to Iran to maintain Britain's interest in India. The result of his trip was a political and commercial Anglo-Iranian treaty of 1801 (Atkin, 1980) in which Iran undertook to form an alliance with Britain against Afghans and French in exchange for being provided with modern artillery and up-to-date weapons.

As a part of the global rivalry between the big powers, it was France's turn to seek its colonial interests in the Orient. Following correspondence with Fath Ali Shah, the King of the Qajar dynasty at the time, Napoleon sent two unofficial envoys to Persia in 1805. These envoys were Amédée Jaubert, who spoke several Eastern languages including Persian and Georgian, and Alexander Romieu, a career officer who was ordered to study the military system of Persia (Iranicaonline.org, 2016). During his stay in Iran, Jaubert had several meetings with Iranian courtiers and among them was Crown Prince Abbas Mirza. Witnessing the defeat of Iran in the war against Russia, as is mentioned before, Abbas Mirza posed a crucial question to Jaubert that had an epochal effect on the ensuing events. Asking of the causes of Iranian backwardness, he placed Iran in a new plane providing her with a new set of relations and interactions. This emerging condition was identified by Wallerstein as a foundation based on which the West imposed its theory of progress to the Orient (1997). To explain it further, we must touch upon its twofold consequence both on the ideological and practical spheres. Ideologically, from then

on, the state of affairs was conceived in a linear way in which there were European countries, on the one hand, at the head of the progress line, and Iran, on the other hand, lagged behind stagnating at the threshold of development. Subsequently, this sense of backwardness became a constituent element of Iranian consciousness. In practice, Abbas Mirza's question paved the way for the projection of Western policies and thought on the ground in Iran. Hence, the 19th and 20th centuries for Iran are characterised by increasing numbers of economic and political concessions to and treaties with Western states and companies. Among them were the Finkenstein Treaty with France in 1807 and the subsequent mission of Gardan, a French aide-de-camp, representing Napoleon's Oriental ambitions in attaching Iran into his projects against British India (Greaves, 1991). According to the Finkenstein Treaty, alongside the acknowledgment of the territorial integrity of Iran and her historical claim to Georgia, France was committed to assisting Iran by providing her with weapons and military advisers. "Iran, in return, undertook to declare war on Great Britain; to expel British citizens from Iranian territory; to work with Afghans and the Marathas to attack the British possessions in India; and should Napoleon embark upon the invasion of India, to give the French army passage across the country" (Greaves, 1991: 381). Finding herself behind Britain and France, Russia imposed the Gulistan and Turkmanchai Treaties on Iran in 1813 and 1828 respectively, in which Iran lost vast areas of the Caucasian provinces.

Colonising Iran, this military and political pressure was to incorporate Iran into the Universal History. Although she was never colonised completely, Iran became the particular moment of the Universal that had hitherto stood outside it waiting for the reconciliation. Additionally, the reconciliation of Iran with the Universal was also reinforced by economic interactions with the West.



In this regard, the military supremacy of European countries furnished the base for commercial capitulations to them. So, “they opened commercial and consular offices wherever they wished, and exempted their merchants not only from the high import duties but also from internal tariffs, local travel restrictions, and jurisdiction of Shari’a court” (Abrahamian, 1982: 51). Seeking for new markets and raw materials to meet their economic ambitions, foreign states, mainly Great Britain and Russia, attempted to dominate the flow of economic activity and the circulation of goods. The budget deficit was the main internal factor to induce the state of Iran to sell economic concessions to the Western governments. The brief summary of 19<sup>th</sup> century concessions is shown below:

**Table 3-1: List of concessions in Qajar period**

| <b>Concession</b>               | <b>Granted to</b> | <b>Detail</b>  | <b>Date</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Telegraph lines                 | Britain           | Establishing and operating telegraph lines   | 1862-1918   |
| Karun River                     | Britain           | Opening the Karun River to international navigation  | 1888        |
| Road construction & Railway     | Britain           | Constructing and operating roads and railroads   | 1890-1913   |
| Persian rivers                  | Russia            | Navigating Persian rivers  | 1889        |
| Imperial Bank of Persia         | Britain           | Establishing the Imperial Bank of Persia with a monopoly on the issue of paper money   | 1889        |
| Caspian fisheries               | Russia            | Exploiting the Caspian fisheries   | 1888-1906   |
| Loan company                    | Russia            | Establishing loan company  | 1890        |
| Insurance and transport company | Russia            | Constructing a road in northern Iran   | 1893        |
| Mazandaran forests              | Russia            | Exploiting the Mazandaran forests  | 1899        |
| Mining firm                     | Russia            | Prospecting for and developing mineral resources   | 1899        |
| Coal mines and oilfields        | Russia            | Exploit the coal mines and oilfields   | -           |
| Oil pipeline                    | Russia            | Constructing an oil pipeline   | 1911        |
| D'Arcy                          | Britain           | Searching for, exploiting, exporting, and selling natural gas and petroleum from anywhere on Persian territory (except the northern provinces) for sixty years | 1901        |

(Source: Iranicaonline.org, 2016)

However, the increasing commercial exchange, alongside the improvement of transportation and the arrival of steamships into the Persian Gulf in 1838 had an immense influence on the Iranian economy. Issawi estimates that between 1800 and the 1850s the trade rose about threefold and quadrupled again by 1914, a total rise of about twelve times during the whole period (1971: 132). In addition, there is an observable growth in imports from £2 million in 1830 to over £5 million in 1900. Also, exports, mainly raw cotton, silk, wheat, rice, tobacco, carpets, and opium, grew in the same period from £2 million to about £3.8 million (Abrahamian, 1982: 51).

The whole process of the incorporation of Iran into the global order is summarised by Abrahamian as follows:

“Thus military defeats led to diplomatic concessions; diplomatic concessions produced commercial capitulations; commercial capitulations paved the way for economic penetration; and economic penetration, by undermining traditional handicrafts, was to cause drastic social dislocations” (1982: 52).

Going beyond a linear historiography, Lefebvre’s dialectic helps us to set this process in a dialectical plain. Dialectically, therefore, Iran, acted as the alienated that had to be returned to the universal. Being an object of insatiable capitalism, this alienation had to be superseded and integrated into the global capitalism; being thus at home in its other-being as such (Marx, 1932). So, by merging Iran into the global order, the Universal superseded this opposition and transcended itself. Thus, this reconciliation must be treated as a transcendence of expanding global capitalism and its movement to the next level. This transformation of the global capitalism, obviously, has its trace on Tehran as far order, to use Lefebvre’s language, projects itself onto the practico-material reality of the urban level. Not did Tehran passively accept and

express the far order. In the next sections I will touch upon the way in which Tehran creatively materialised these global forces by means of its particular history and subjects who were actively engaged in the production of space of Tehran at the local level.

### **3-3- The advent of Iranian modernity**

When in 1785 the founder of the Qajar dynasty, Agha Mohammad Khan, appointed Tehran as the capital of his state, no one would have thought that within 200 years it could become one of the biggest metropolises in the world. But, how are we to explain this rapid transformation? What forces were at work to make this massive change happen? Would it be sufficient to give a descriptive analysis of this transformation? In other words, would it be an exhaustive understanding of the historical development of Tehran if one depicts a series of chronological events which occurred within a certain period? Or, otherwise, we need to go beyond the mere perception and touch upon conflicting discourses and ideological instances hidden behind the surface of Tehran. In the previous chapter, I sought to elaborate on the way in which Lefebvre conceives historical phenomena. Working on rural sociology, Lefebvre introduced the three-step method based on the dialectical method. As Lefebvre expresses, we must plunge into the past in order to find the genesis of a current phenomenon. After having discovered its origin, we must bring its historical transformation into consideration and elaborate the path through which the phenomenon passes all the way from its advent to its current formation. Then, this historical background provides us with empirical material to explain the causes of its new arrangement and to reveal the forces which were at work to reconfigure the phenomenon into the present state.

Accordingly, in examining post-revolutionary Tehran we inevitably have to refer to the history of Iran before the revolution too. In doing so, we need to show at once its historical continuity and discontinuity. Also, in keeping with Lefebvrian thought, we should bear in mind that these continuous/discontinuous movements are set in motion by the logic of dialectic and its celebrated *Aufhebung*.

In terms of discontinuity, there are three moments in the modern history of Iran causing rupture in the old order of things and affecting heavily at once Iranian consciousness and their cities. First, the failure of Iranian troops in a series of wars against the Russian army must be pointed out as the very first moment in which Iranian was confronted with the Other, which later gave a label as *Farangi*<sup>1</sup>. Before this, despite sporadic trade exchanges between the West and Iran, the latter was almost an autonomous territory (Issawi, 1991: 5). Lasting for more than one century, from 1722 to 1828, these wars ended up with a vast loss of Iranian territories. Prior to this time, both Iranian government and social life were conducted through traditional principles arising from ancient and medieval Islamic periods. Moreover, there was no modern army, neither was it well equipped. In fact, an irregular army was the only defensive force and it was incapable of keeping the country secure from foreign invasion. Rabi and Ter-Oganov have listed the characteristics of this army that well describe its condition in the 18<sup>th</sup> century:

“First, the army did not assemble on a regular basis. Instead, forces were called to order when they were needed, as in times of war or internal conflict. Second, troops were managed and provisioned in an irregular manner, which was largely due to the absence of military institutions. Third, the army’s organization was informal rather than institutionalized, in line with a Weberian

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<sup>1</sup> . This Persian word has its root from English word of foreigner

state model, and a great deal of emphasis was placed on personal ties between the Shah and the tribal leaders” (2012: 334).

These elements signify the traditional nature of the Iranian army that ultimately resulted in the series of defeats in the wars against Russian troops.

These breakdowns set the ground for the formation of a new consciousness among Iranians. Iranian courtiers came to the conclusion that the main reason for their defeat was the superior Russian troops and their advanced technology. Thus, Prince Abbas Mirza (1789-1833) reached the point that the only way to defend Iran’s territory was to follow European military organisation. James Morier, a British diplomat, who worked in Iran in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, quoted Abbas Mirza as saying that “he believed it was in vain to fight the Russians without soldiers like theirs, and that their artillery could only be opposed by artillery” (Morier, 1812 in Iranicaonline.org, 2016). Hence this was the initial moment that Iran became aware of Other who later on had a massive influence on the constitution of their consciousness and consequently on the construction of Iranian social life. Later on, on the direct command of Abbas Mirza, the first press machine was imported into Iran and some books were translated from foreign languages to Persian. Furthermore, as a result of this confrontation the first Iranian magazine, *Kaghaz-e Akhbar*, which name came from direct translation of the word newspaper, appeared in 1837 in Tehran.

After being eager to discover the causes of superiority of the West, there was a series of trips to the West. Kings, princes, and courtiers started visiting European countries. Students were sent to the European academia to enjoy the advanced education. Interestingly, these students were not only from enlightened families, but also from traditional sections of society, namely merchants and tradespeople. Among these trips that of Nasser al-Din Shah, the king of Persia

at that time, to *Farang* in 1873, should be marked as a watershed in the history of Iran and the second crucial moment of Iran breaking with its old era. Fascinated by the progress and development of Western nations, Nasser al-Din Shah ordered members of his state to follow the foreign path in order to achieve improvement. It was then that some foreign words such as progress, reform, and modernity, that refer to the secular future, in contrast to the Islamic transcendental future that refers to the life after death and had dominated Iranian culture, found their Persian adaptation and were added to the Iranian vocabulary. Based on this imagination, *Shams al-Emareh*, the Building of Sun, was constructed on the king's direct decree. Having seen the western high-rise structures, Nasser al-Din Shah commanded that an Iranian counterpart be built so that he could see all of Tehran from its roof. This building is believed to be the first structure built according to western patterns and, therefore, was among those first moments that the hegemony of Islamic architecture was broken after its approximate 1200-year reign. Since then, *Shams al-Emareh* dominated the skyline of Tehran for a rather long time until the proliferation of high-rise towers in the next century. Moreover, in the period of Nasser al-Din Shah's reign, the first modern institution of higher education was established which was an apparent break with the traditional Iranian pedagogy. Looking for an innovation in military techniques, Amir Kabir, the chief minister of the Shah and the pioneer of the reformist movement, founded *Dar al-Funun* at the centre of Tehran in 1851 and attempted to recruit *Farangi* teachers.

This new encounter and interaction with the West, intensified with the global capitalist economic tendency to drag Third World countries into their markets and to establish a new centre-periphery order, brought with itself its discourse and practices. Thus, the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the time of the emergence of modern intelligentsia, who 'through travels, translations and new

educational establishments tried to adopt modern ideas, aspirations and values along Western lines' (Madanipour, 2003: 138). Furthermore, alongside these intellectual movements was the process of modernisation of the physical environment. George Curzon, Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary, who visited Tehran at that time, described these changes as follows:

“The old walls and towers were for the most part pulled down, the ditch was filled up, a large slice of surrounding plain was taken in, and at the distance of a full mile from the old enclosure, a new rampart was constructed upon Vauban's system, copied from the fortifications of Paris before the German war.

...

That the city has yet much to do before it realises the full aspirations of its royal Hussmann is evident as soon as we enter the gates” (Curzon, 1892: 305-6).

The advent of modern subjects and their inherent practices, however, were not the end of the story of breaking with the past. Later on, there was a constitutional movement whose main proponents were a group of intellectuals heavily inspired by the West. After the victory of Constitutionalists in establishing the first *Majles* (parliament) in Iran in 1906 and in making a constitution, modelled primarily from the Belgian constitution, in which the aim was to limit the power of the Shah, the modern discourse found the upper hand.

The culmination of the process of modernising Iran, however, was the moment when Reza Shah came to power. This was the third moment of fatal confrontation between the old and the new. Dethroning the last king of the Qajar dynasty, Reza Shah founded the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Although he did not have any sympathy with the social utopia of a modern society such as freedom and justice, he was fully inspired by the path his Turkish counterpart, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, had driven Turkey through the road of progress. As a result, Reza Shah put



‘modernisation from above’ on the agenda. Although he introduced himself as a Muslim, he had a strong hostility to any signs of Islam within the city. Hence, his decree to take the hijab off from women’s heads in the public space raised severe protestations. Reza Shah’s modernisation from above has been labelled as pseudo-modernisation in some scholarships to highlight the poor understanding of modernisation and social development of European countries not only by the Shah himself, but also among a great number of Iranian intellectuals as well. Katouzian, for instance, believes through pseudo-modernisation technological progress is seen as:

“Omnipotent, and capable of performing miracles which would solve any and all socio-economic problems once purchased and installed; why traditional social values and production techniques are regarded as inherent symbols, indeed causes, of backwardness, and sources of national embarrassment... and the installation of a modern steel plant not as a means but as an end in itself” (1981: 103).

The spatial implication of this modernisation from above was colossal for the city of Tehran so that anyone who had returned to Tehran in those days, after an absence of a few years, would have not recognised it (Lockhart: 12); the 12 old gates were demolished in order for the new king to follow his ideal of development. Wide boulevards, along with new streets, were constructed to pave the way for the movement of goods, labour, and money, not to mention its military aims. Furthermore, Reza Shah invested a significant part of his budget on restoration of infrastructure and development of the transportation network of Tehran. Alongside these, we should add the accelerating trend of importing industries which were mostly accommodated in the south and east of Tehran.

This trend was intensified when Reza Shah was succeeded by his son Muhammad Reza. The new Shah followed his father's ambition in making Iran the most developed and modernised country in the region. In doing so, the oil industry, which had been recently nationalised, helped him to fund his modernisation programme. Moreover, this new oil revenue gave Iran a new geopolitical position in the network of international relations. I will return back to this point later to explain the implications of this condition on Tehran.

Thus, as I have already mentioned, there were three moments that changed the social structure and physical environment of Iran. These events tore the old order apart and set a new ground for the future. First, the failure of Iranian troops in a series of wars against Russia woke Iran up from her long hibernation and made her aware of the technological advancement of the West. Then, the travel of courtiers and students to European countries shaped a new consciousness among Iranians. Founded on the big Other, it was this emerging dichotomy of East/West that constituted a new consciousness among Iranians based on which the West was the symbol of development, progress, and welfare and the East was represented as backwardness, tradition, and hardship. Finally, the coronation of Reza Shah was a vivid declaration of war against past history. In contrast to Islamic history, which began with the Muslim conquest of Persia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the pre-Islamic history when Persian kingdom was the master of the world was admired and became a nostalgia. Placing modernisation from above on the agenda, Reza Shah introduced himself as a king capable of returning Iran to the time of pride and power.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran must be addressed against this context. Experiencing a rapid and overwhelming process of modernisation, the forces on the counter camp put all of their efforts into negating it. Hence the alliance between various parties and sections of society from traditionalists and political Islamists to Leftists, and even Liberals, against the status quo. But,

before dealing with the revolution and its post-history, I wish to present the history of land in this modern era. For, as the result of this new condition the land problematic underwent a tremendous transformation in respect to both practices and discourses.

### **3-4- The land problematic: The transformation of meaning and function of land**

In 1874 the Qajar dynasty issued a decree declaring the sale of *kaleseh*<sup>1</sup>. The sale of lands was not a new economic interaction, but, it was submitted to the supremacy of the king's ownership. In other words, up to this moment, the dominant form of tenure was the king's ownership. "According to the old [Islamic] traditions the ownership of fields and pastures belong to God. This right is transferred to Shah (king) by God in order for lands to be cultivated and developed" (Sharif, 1973). Before the 1874 decree, the dominant trend was that the king, the true proprietor of territorial lands, transferred to certain courtiers and allies the right to exploit lands and pastures as a concession in exchange for taxes or military duties. So, I would like to pose this question, under which condition the sale of lands became possible. What kind of logic had become hegemonic so that this process materialised on the ground? This line of argument encourages us to reveal the process of articulation of this new discourse which ultimately transformed the meaning of and practice on land.

To begin with, we must distinguish between two levels of analysis, namely the level of practice and the level of discourse. Here, I attempt to elaborate on each of these levels showing the way

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<sup>1</sup> - Those King's lands that were handed over to his courtiers as a concession in exchange for taxes or military duties.

in which they were interwoven constructing a new plain on which the sale of lands became possible.

It has been stated before that the defeat of Iran in the Russo-Persian wars set the context for the constituting of a new consciousness that saw the West as the cradle of civilisation and progress. These wars, however, had another impact in the area of everyday life of Iranians. Following the defeat, there were two treaties viz. Gulestan and Torkamanchai imposed on Iran. More important than the vast areas that Iran lost sovereignty over, were sections 8, 9, and 10 of the Gulestan treaty. On the travel of business caravans beyond mutual borders, section 8 holds:

“Both states allow those merchants who have singed paper from their own state to pass over land or maritime boundaries and stay as long as he is involved in commercial activities. On their way back to their homelands, merchants should not be confronted to any barriers so that they can sell or exchange what they bring from Russia to Iran or from Iran to Russia” (Varham, 2006: 666 in Bahiraei, forthcoming).

This was a new stance that attempted to facilitate commercial interactions even in the periods of war. If commerce is so essential that even during warfare its terms must be respected, then there should be a mechanism to remove any barriers in the way of commerce development. Hence there is the need for quantification of tariffs and duties. In other words, tariff bureaucracy and the difficulties it may make on the flow of goods could be alleviated by transforming their complexity into mere numbers. This was done by section 9 of the Gulestan treaty in which duties were unified and decreased to only 5% *ad valorem*. and foreign merchants were exempt from all inland and transit duties. This new attitude was further reinforced by the Turkamanchay treaty (1828) where the Shah of Iran and the Tsar of the Russian Empire considered the establishment and development of commercial relations between the two states as an immediate

benefit of a ceasefire (Varham, 2006 in Bahiraei, forthcoming). Similarly, other states, Britain in particular, sought for the same concessions with Iran. As a result, the total trade, including both imports and exports, was estimated to have increased by four times between 1860 and 1914 (Issawi, 1971: 131).

In effect, these practices were to set the context for the incorporation of Iran into world markets by means of trade liberation. It seems essential to reflect on this emerging condition through the international level as well. I would like to draw attention to the interdependency of the sanctity of free trade and the requirements of the global market at the time since it heavily affects the fate of Iran. In fact, this was a time when European powers sought for new opportunities and markets in order to keep the process of capital circulation moving. This idea of progress which had a fundamental role in the construction of liberalism in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries had to be materialised on the ground. Therefore, the emerging market of Iran found a critical significance in the newly constructed global order. The urge to free trade and granting of commercial concessions, also, must be understood against this background.

Acceleration of free trade secured by political treaties, even further peripheralised Iran in the new world system. In accordance with Wallerstein's theory, Issawi describes this as "imperialism of free trade" founded on a belief that "interests of the industrialized countries were best served by the removal of all restrictions on commerce" (1982: 19). Therefore, industrial powers made an effort to promote free trade with the colonies mostly through encouraging imports into and discouraging exports from them.

Suffering from a weak and fractured economy, Iran, therefore, was entering into an unequal relation with the West in which what could be exported were mere raw agricultural products.

On the other hand, in a rather short time the import of European machine-made goods and consumer products, in particular “colonial goods”, i.e. sugar, tea and spices, found its way into Iran’s market (Table 3-2).

**Table 3-2: Composition of foreign trade in 1909**

| <b>Export</b>            |                    |      | <b>Import</b>             |                    |      |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------|---------------------------|--------------------|------|
|                          | Value <sup>a</sup> | %    |                           | Value <sup>a</sup> | %    |
| <b>Raw cotton</b>        | 12602              | 22   | <b>Textile</b>            | 31785              | 41.3 |
| <b>Dried fruits</b>      | 9573               | 16.7 |                           |                    |      |
| <b>Carpet</b>            | 8714               | 15.2 | <b>Sugar</b>              | 21700              | 28.2 |
| <b>Cereals</b>           | 4890               | 8.5  | <b>Tea</b>                | 44.68              | 5.8  |
| <b>Fish and products</b> | 38.27              | 6.7  |                           |                    |      |
| <b>Opium</b>             | 3167               | 5.5  | <b>Metal and products</b> | 3488               | 4.5  |
| <b>Cocoon</b>            | 3030               | 5.3  | <b>Kerosene</b>           | 1443               | 1.9  |
| <b>Leather and hides</b> | 2146               | 3.7  |                           |                    |      |
| <b>Others</b>            | 9276               | 16.4 | <b>Others</b>             | 13950              | 18.3 |
| <b>Total</b>             | 57226              | 100  | <b>Total</b>              | 76834              | 100  |

<sup>a</sup> Value in 1000 of gold Roubles  
(Source: Entner, 1965)

Soon after, even those local industries which manufactured petty products such as textiles and sugar declined and ultimately shut down. There are similar reports on the decline of the production of other goods such as sugar and manufactured textiles. In fact, the result of the free trade movement was nothing less than the shutting down of national production i.e. handicrafts and local industries: “while in 1844 more than 70% of Persia’s exports consisted of handicrafts, by 1910 this share, excluding carpets, had dropped to virtually nil”(Karshenas, 1990: 48). In the same vein, Foran reports that in the 1870s more than 73% of imports was composed of

manufactured products, dominated by textiles, sugar, and tea, whereas the export of the same goods accounted for 13% (Foran, 1993). The immediate result was that the value of exports exceeded the value of imports and consequently a trade deficit resulted.

But, what was the implication of this new condition for land? How did it problematise land tenure? Here I endeavour to answer these questions. For, I believe, this emerging condition embedded Iran in a new set of relations leading to a novel articulation of land problematic.

As it is shown, the Free Trade Movement not only scaled down the quantity of national production and damaged local handicraft businesses in Iran, but also transformed it into a consumer peripheral node within a newly constructed global system. The needs of the global market now dictated its logic to land in general and agricultural production in particular. In this respect, the Russian consulate in Iran reported that in some provinces inhabitants realised that it is more profitable to export cocoon and raw silk rather than silk textile. Consequently, those handicrafts related to silk gradually disappeared in this region. In a rather short period, the export of cocoon, cotton, and opium became a dominant trend. There were various reports, Issawi adds, written in the 1840s and 1850s, describing the decay of ancient and flourishing centres of handicraft production such as Kashan, Isfahan, Shiraz, Kirman, and Yazd (1991: 598). This trend is well summarised by Issawi:

“The expansion in crops for export had repercussions on Iranian agriculture. With the exception noted above, there were no important changes in techniques. But the opportunity of higher income for landlords and increased participation of foreign and Iranian merchants and moneylenders in agriculture, replaced traditional agrarian relations by a more “capitalistic” one.”

(Issawi, 1991: 599)

Consequently, the cultivation of cash crops took over other forms of agriculture namely self-sufficient and subsistence farming. Now, it was the value of cash crops that determined the quality of farming. There are several reports from the same period that show the old unprofitable agricultural products were replaced by those determined by market demand. In 1860, there was a land bill passed suggesting “allocating one or two lots among those less productive khaleseh in countryside to sericulture” (Adamiyat, 1977: 201 in Bahiraei, forthcoming). So, this was a momentous point in the history of Iran that a new consciousness was becoming articulated. Based on this new rationality the cultivation and trade of cash crops were justified as a means of empowerment and improvement of Iranian life.

As this new rationality had become prevalent the state apparatus must have made itself compatible with the requirements of profitability. Therefore, the domain of the state intervention was also mediated by financial variables. It was not the product but the “value” of the product that determined if the state needed to take part in affairs or not. The result of this new consciousness was nothing less than conditioning the meaning and value of lands to monetary relations. In other words, it was the notion of profit and surplus value that determined what type of crops had to be cultivated. So, during this period, the meaning of land underwent a tremendous transformation. It was detached from the everyday usage of land i.e. use value, and, subsequently, tied up with the value of its product in the market i.e. exchange value. In Marxian language this process is to be called the supremacy of exchange value over use value. Needless to say that it in no way means that there were not any monetary transactions on land products prior to this period. Rather, these exchange functions were subordinated to the use value of lands and their products.



Therefore, in the aftermath of growing commercial agriculture, ownership of land became a main source of accumulation of wealth. This led to large-scale usurpation of state lands and *Tuyuls*<sup>1</sup> by government officials and local power holders (Karshenas, 1990: 45). Ever since, Issawi reports, land rents seem to have risen sharply, there is evidence of growing concentration of ownership, and some large landlords appear to have taken a more active interest in their farms (Issawi, 1991). Land was no longer self-sufficient geographical body meeting the daily needs of inhabitants who were circumscribed within it. Rather, it had become open to the world market setting locality within a global order. The supremacy of exchange value over use value, also, was at work to commodify lands. In fact, this process of commodification of lands made the condition of the sale of *Khalesh* possible.

### **3-5- Implications of modernisation on Tehran**

For Lefebvre modernity is essentially bound up with urbanity. Drawing on his own life's experience, he saw his own city, Mourenx, as the place where modernity "opens its pages to him" (Lefebvre, 1995: 119). To be faithful to the Lefebvrian approach, we must treat the urban as a constituent element of modernity in which not only modernity actualises itself but also is transcended. In other words, the urban is not a blank paper on which modernity is written. Quite the contrary, any particular urbanity engaging in a dialectical relation with modernity transforms it and makes its own modernity. Through this dialectical interpenetration modernity is inscribed on the urban and the urban is abstracted in modernity.

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<sup>1</sup> - Tax farms

<sup>2</sup>

The reciprocal interaction of modernity and urbanity is, too, exemplified through the city of Tehran. Therefore, to grasp the essence of Iranian modernity is to grasp the Iranian urbanity. In the following section, I will be examining the spatiality of Iranian modernity; not to mention that it is to disclose the modernity of Iranian space as well.

### **3-5-1- Urbanisation**

In the previous section the transformation of the meaning and function of land was discussed. Here, I shall reflect on the implications of this transformation on the urban scene. In so doing, my argument takes two different levels into consideration attempting to knit them into a single plane of discussion. The first level encompasses the international setting that is labelled as the far order by Lefebvre, and the second contains the national level in which the birth of the modern nation-state plays a key role. I will be explaining how the underlying elements of these two levels got together, unfolded, and materialised themselves through the space of Tehran. The same forces, furthermore, imposed a new set of relations on Tehran changing its form of urbanity and country-town relationship.

Before the integration of Iran into the global order in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the composition of the social structure was dominated by pre-capitalist relations. In this configuration the countryside was the locus of production. The circulation of money was rather limited and money-economy, therefore, had not developed yet. The mode of production, furthermore, rested on agricultural products and husbandry. This agricultural production was characterised by its relative autonomy in which cultivation of subsistence crops sufficed to the reproduction of labour power. In this respect, villages consisted of self-sufficient units which generated labour

power within their own units. Through this agricultural mode of production landlords usually exploited peasants by means of money wage or ground rent. However, this economic surplus was mainly extracted through rent in kind rather than in money. In the agrarian economy, economic surpluses were sent to cities in order to be either consumed or exchanged. So, cities were in general the centres of consumption and commerce. Yet, they were inhabited by artisans and tradesmen and accommodated small firms and petty production. However, within the whole economic structure this petty production had an inferior position in comparison to the agrarian production of the countryside. Overall, the social and spatial structure was similar to the pre-industrial cities in Europe where, as Lefebvre showed, the countryside was dominant over the city (Lefebvre, 2003). Nonetheless, there was a difference which needs to be mentioned here. On the contrary to western feudalism, the supremacy of countryside over town did not make the latter a heterotopic agglomeration. In Lefebvre's historiography, merchandise, markets, and merchants bore the signs of heterotopy until the end of the middle ages (Lefebvre, 2003) and were consequently hostile to ruling powers. But, in the Iranian context, cities were at once centres of trade and power. Kings typically built their palaces and established their administration within borders of cities. So, unlike the decentred system of power evolving around the countryside, the Iranian system of power was generally seated in cities. During pre-modern Iran, therefore, the place of production was separated from the centre of power. This had become possible through the function of absentee landlords which was one of the marked characteristics of Iranian peasantry. Owning vast parts of agricultural lands, absentee landlords usually lived in cities. They also acted as mediators between country and town by transferring surplus products of the countryside to cities.

To sum up, the total structure of society in pre-capitalist history mainly consisted of two supplementary elements namely town and country. Country was the centre of (agricultural) production and town was the centre of political power and consumption. In this regard, town was dependent on the economic surplus of the countryside. Although trade and commercial interactions occurred in cities, the exchange process was mainly to fulfill the immediate needs of inhabitants rather than seeking surplus capital. In this sense, in the pre-capitalist phase, we witness the dominance of use value over exchange value.

The first shift occurred due to the penetration of the local structure by global trends. In a given moment, the relationship of country and town changed and the country lost its supremacy over the town. It was the time that, as is shown in the last section, Iran became a peripheral node in a new world system. The production of subsistence crops, the sign of self-sufficient units, was replaced by the cultivation of cash crops. Ever since, the country did not produce for its own use. On the contrary, the production of the countryside had town markets as its goal. This was a symptom of reversing the country-town relationships. During this period, the old structure was substituted with a new one in which there was, on the one hand, country that is designed to send its surpluses to town markets and, on the other hand, there was town that was transformed into a consumption locus of industrial and machinery productions of global power. As a result, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the rise of export of agricultural products such as wheat, barley, rice, cotton, and opium, was supplemented by the import of foreign products. Soudagar, for instance, reports that between the 1910s and 1938 the share of the import of industrial machinery increased from 3% to 33% of the total imported items (Soudagar, 1997). So, the first shift is characterised by the domination of consumption over production and the town over the country. For, the country became dependent on the town producing for markets of cities.

In addition to international influence, we must take into consideration the ambition of a modern state to industrialise the country, the point that I would like to elaborate on now. Beside international forces, the imposition of capitalist relations needed a local accomplice to meet the requirements of capitalism. To achieve this ambition, it demands to Forge a national integrated market, the prevalence of wage labour, and free movement of goods and labour power. For this to become possible they had to wait until the birth of the modern nation-state. For, in the absence of the bourgeois class, the burden of paving the way for the realisation of capitalist relations was on the shoulders of the modern state. Not only did it have to build a physical context for the free circulation of capital but also to provide the requirements for the reproduction of labour power. To do so, the state needed to improve its efficiency and modernise its apparatus.

The overthrow of the Qajar dynasty and the enthronement of Reza Shah, the founder of Pahlavi, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century set the context for the emergence of such a new modern state. Similar to its European counterpart, Reza Shah had confronted the problem of overaccumulation of surpluses extracted from confiscated lands, *Khaleseh*. Harvey has well illuminated the process through which state intervention seeks to solve the issue of absorbing of capital and labour surpluses by means of investment in physical and social infrastructure (Harvey, 1985, 1989). Following the same logic, Reza Shah's policies were set in motion on two varied, but interconnected, terrains. Firstly, he introduced a new modern bureaucracy including health and education services and formed a regular centralised army. Founded in Tehran, this nascent bureaucracy was among the first steps to displace and disintegrate the relationship between town and country. While the country was losing its importance, alongside the replacement of production with consumption as the constitutive element of society, day by day town was gaining a higher position. So, the concentration of these emerging educational institutions,

health centres, and military bases must be seen in this light. Ever since then, Tehran experienced a rapid process of concentration along with its supplementary part, namely decentralisation. This double process reminds us of the term implosion-explosion coined by Lefebvre (2003:14):

“The tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instruments, means, and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection of numerous, disjunct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation, homes, satellite towns) into space”.

Secondly, Pahlavi's state put massive urban projects on the agenda, a necessary factor to foster a single national market. Following this, the volume of state investment increased from 830 to 1680 billion tomans between 1926 and 1938 (Soudagar, 1997). A big part of this was spent on road construction that became tenfold larger within 15 years. Furthermore, the first national railway was built in the same period and cost almost £30 billion. Moreover, there were limited advancements on post and telegraph as well. The number of vehicles, also, rose from 1,200 to 31,000 in 1921 and 1945 respectively (Soudagar, 1997).

What these figures show is that the urban projects in company with modern bureaucracy enhanced the flow of capital and labour surplus to be absorbed in the city. This investment in social and physical infrastructure of the city, furthermore, deepened the reversal of the country-town relationship.

But, the next shift in this relationship occurred in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when oil revenue came to dominate the main part of state revenue. Nationalised in 1953, oil exports gradually became the key source of financing state-led urbanisation. Since then, the urban has become less dependent on the country surplus which, in part, weakened the status of the latter even more than before. On the other hand, the urban reliance on economic surplus extracted from oil

exports became more evident. This condition is represented in the fall of the share of agricultural production in total domestic production:

**Table 3-3: Agricultural production in total domestic production (%)**

|   | <b>1926-1950</b> | <b>1959</b> | <b>1961</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>The share of agricultural production</b> | 50%              | 32%         | 30.5%       |

(Source: Soudagar, 1997)

Oil revenue was partly invested in the social and physical infrastructure of the city and partly spent on importing consumer or intermediate goods from the West. Coupled with foreign debts, the growth of international trade and improvement in national transportation, Tehran was going to be a peripheral node of realisation of capitalist relations.

Moreover, in this period, not only did the quantity of the relationship between town and country change, but also it was qualitatively transformed into a new phase. Since then, the town-country binary was gradually replaced by a centre-periphery duality. Since the export of agricultural products was substituted by oil income the country further lost its significance in the social whole. Oil revenue, therefore, put an end to the dependency of the town on the country. For the economic surplus the urban requirement was secured from oil income rather than cash crops.

To understand the logic of this emerging condition, centrality must be taken into account from two different scales; first, in respect to the region the urban effect and second, in respect to the city itself. As far as the inner functions of the city were concerned, oil income furnished the basis for the penetration of capital into the heart of the urban scene placing Tehran at the centre of social and economic life. The subsequent growth of industrial infrastructure, stemmed from state ambition to make Iran an advanced industrial country, and, alongside the development of

financial institutions turned Tehran into a profitable site of capital accumulation. As a result, the city became a centre of work and labour, leisure and consumption. Lefebvre argues: “the essential aspect of the urban phenomenon is its centrality” (2003: 116). He continues: “piles of objects and products in warehouses, mounds of fruit in the marketplace, crowds, pedestrians, goods of various kinds, juxtaposed, superimposed, accumulated – that is what makes the urban urban” (2003: 116). Taken as a form, the urban is seen from Lefebvre’s eyes as a centre of combination:

“It combines markets (the inventory includes the market for agricultural and industrial products - local, regional, national, global: capital markets, labor markets, market for the land itself, for signs and symbols). The city brings together whatever is engendered somewhere else, by nature or labor: fruits and objects, products and producers, works and creations, activities and situations” (2003:-118).

This passage was written in the context of European cities. So, when it comes to Iran with its reliance on oil and independency from agricultural products there is denser concentration and undoubtedly stronger quality of centrality of the urban.

Regionally, the logic of the urban destroyed the old binary of town-country establishing a new relationship to its countryside. The wave of urbanisation influenced even more distant rural areas. If the rural space was a self-sufficient and autonomous territory which met its needs by means of agricultural products, now it was entered into a socioeconomic network imposed on it by the urban. Creating a new set of relationships, the urban superimposed its rationality to at once both near and far distances. Since then, the country was understood as a part of the city, a periphery of it. Urban life penetrated the countryside. This centrality, as Lefebvre shows, entails a system of objects and of values:



“The best known elements of the urban systems of objects include water, electricity, gas, not to mention the car, the television, plastic utensils, modern furniture, which entail new demand with regard to services. Among the elements of the system of values we can note urban leisure (dance and song), suits, the rapid adoption of fashions from the city. And also, preoccupations with security, the need to predict the future, in brief, a rationality communicated by the city” (1996: 72).

Let me summarise it. In this section, I attempted to periodise the process of urbanisation with the emphasis on the town-country relationship. In the pre-history of urbanisation, the time of supremacy of nature, the society was composed of the country, on the one hand, and the city, on the other hand. However, the country as a centre of production had dominated the city. In this historiography, the significant difference between the West and Iran was the establishment of power within cities, whereas, in the West we had a de-centred manorial system of power. This difference, however, did not permit the cities of Iran to be a dominant element in the country-town relationship since the process of production was a key constitutive measure of society.

The first shift occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the result of the integration of Iran into the global order. Although it left intact the underlying elements of the society, that is the country and the urban, the relationship between them was reversed. In this moment, the country began to produce for city markets as the logic of trade had prevailed. The type of agricultural products, therefore, changed from subsistence products to cash crops. Moreover, at this time production was replaced with consumption and use value with exchange value.

The birth and consolidation of the modern nation-state caused the second shift. Coupled with oil income, the urban became relatively independent from the country. Since then, urban life

and practices were influenced by economic surpluses extracted from oil revenues rather than any economic surplus of the countryside. This surplus capital was partly invested in creating a central bureaucracy evolving around health and education services alongside the regular army. The other part of this economic surplus was absorbed in physical infrastructure such as transportation, road construction, and urban projects. Against this context, the old relationship between town and country was dismantled and subsequently substituted by a new binary relationship based on centre-periphery. The periphery, hence, was subjected to the logic of the centre.

There is another which is seems essential to reflect on. Historically, urbanisation has gone hand in hand with reinforcement of capitalist relations. Integral to capitalist relations is the existence of wage labour. So, there must have been a process through which peasants were separated from their lands. The aim of the next section is to explain how the state acted as a chief agent to transform the nature of the workforce in Iran.

### **3-5-2- The emergence of wage labour**

Up to 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tehran was just a village accommodating around 15 thousands people in itself. It was vastly filled with gardens and grain fields. Appointed as the capital of Qajar dynasty in the last quarter of 18<sup>th</sup> century, since then the fate of Tehran underwent a dramatic changed. This transformation has nowhere better than growth of population revealed itself. This measure shows that Tehran's population rose sharply from 125'952 in 1853 (Ettehadieh, 1998:28), to 4'530'223 in 1976 (Markaz-e Motaleat va Barnamehrizi, 1994:19). This was mainly due to the improvement in infrastructure and concentration of facilities and opportunities

in Tehran. As important as this was the land revolution of Mohammad Reza Shah in 1963 disembedding peasants from their local villages and embedding them within big cities in general, and Tehran in particular. This measure needs to be examined in more detail since it led to a massive flight of peasants to adjacent cities making a reserve army of labour.

Following his white revolution, Mohammad Reza Shah introduced a land reform programme in early 1960s. The programme had three goals: distribution of arable lands; nationalization of woods and forests; denationalization of state monopolies in order to finance the land-reform programme (Katouzian, 1981: 225). Claiming small villagers to be the main beneficiary of this programme whose rights were frequently transgressed by large landowners, the actual goal, however, was to reduce the power of those big landlords whose authority had traditionally dominated the rural areas and as a result were substantial obstacles against the will of the Shah who wanted to spread his arbitrary power all over the country (Hooglund, 1982).

Eventually, the land reform law was signed by the minister of Agriculture, Hassan Arsanjani in 1962. According to this law, landlords whose property exceeded the permissible limit were required to sell their excess holdings to the government and then the government would resell it to the peasants who were previously working on that plots. Far from being practical, the actual result of land reform was a destruction of the old agricultural structure followed by massive rural-urban migration. In the aftermath of land reform, most peasants “experienced difficulty in trying to make a livelihood from their landholdings. Furthermore, land redistribution did not materially benefit the majority of peasants in the sense that they acquired ownership only to plots of (at best) subsistence size” (Hooglund, 1982: 115). Moreover, about half of the rural population, mostly agricultural labours, was not allocated any land at all. Thus, by the end of the so-called land revolution, not only did the living condition of the people in rural areas make

any improvement, but, in practice, it worsened. Subsequently, we witnessed a “mass rural exodus” from villages to big cities hoping for better life. By then, the meaning of the urban space had become equal with development and progress. Having the ideal of urban life, therefore, Hundreds of thousands of villagers put their lives in jeopardy and left their mother born place and traveled to big cities. In fact, this crowd made up the main body of wage labour. According to the 1976 report, the population of Tehran increased from 2’719’000 in 1966 to about 4’500’000 in 1979. Given the average annual growth rate of 3.1 percent, the real increase attributable to immigration would be 52.5 percent (Hoolglund, 1982: 117). In other words, within 10 years some 934 thousands villagers immigrated to Tehran while the whole population of Tehran was around 2’719’000.

### **3-5-3- The spatiality of emerging classes**

In the aftermath of modernization and imported industries, and alongside the integration of Iran into the global order in the late nineteen and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the structure of class of Iranian society significantly changed. Due to the geographical characteristics of Iran, especially its dry climate and the shortage of water resources, the social composition of Iran was traditionally founded on a triad of tribal-rural-urban in which, in 1860s, the urban population did not exceed more than 22% (one million), whereas nomads and villagers each accounted for 38% (1.7 million) of the population (Issawi, 1971).

Fighting against territorial tribes and nomads whose militias were composed of horsemen and bowmen, Reza Shah, the king of Iran, refreshed his army and modernised its bureaucracy in order to extend his authority across the country. In so doing, he managed to secure control over

territorial boundaries of his state by “forced sedentism” (*Takhteh Qapo*) policy that led to the massive sedentism of nomads (Amanullahi Baharvand, 2004). As the result, most of the tribal people settled down in rural areas since urbanization had not been developed yet. Thus, in 1920s, the proportion of rural population grew up to 55% while it dropped to 25% for tribesmen and nomads (Ashraf & Banuazizi, 1992). During this time, the proportion of urban population almost remained constant as about 20%. According to this new demographic change, tribal and agricultural relations remained dominant comprising the most part of economic activities.

Against this background, the dominant strata at the time were comprised of “princes and tribal chieftains, governors and men of the sword, bureaucrats and men of the pen and the high rank *ulama*<sup>1</sup>” (Ashraf & Banuazizi,<sup>3</sup>1992). Furthermore, with a lower socio-economic status, there were tradesmen and merchants (*Bazaari*), small landowners, local nobles, and, with a relative lower position, artisans making up the middle class in the Qajar era. Moreover, at the bottom of the Iranian class pyramid of nineteenth century were peasants, tribesmen, and low-rank worker (Ashraf & Banuazizi, 1992).

This class structure of Iran, however, underwent a series of transformation at the pace of political and economic events occurred in both national and international scale. Nationally, the introduction of industrial sector, the development of trade, the establishment of secular educational institutions, and the expansion of state bureaucracy and militancy resulted in the

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1 - Iranian Islamic clergies. Traditionally, this stratum has had a prominent role in the social life of Iranian, above all, controlling juridical and educational positions in the society. However, there was (is) a hierarchy among this group, grounded on their religious jurisprudent knowledge, from Marja' taghlid (literary means the reference of imitation, the top Shi'a clergy with a high authority to determine Islamic rituals and Muslims have to follow them) at the top to religious students (Tollab) at the bottom.

emergence of new classes, namely national bourgeoisie, modern middle class, and industrial workers. This trend coupled with the new position of Iran within the international relations.

The development of trade in Iran, furthermore, improved the position of local merchants. They were now in an incessant competition with Russian and West European merchants to take more part in operations dealing with cash crops, in particular silk, rice, and opium (Issawi, 1971). This trend was intensified by the recognition of Iran as a potential market for the products of developed countries. As the result of the increasing involvement of Iran into the world market, “the number of the representatives of large Iranian traders in the various world capitals rose appreciably” by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Issawi, 1971: 44). Abdullaev made a list of trade companies and societies coming into exist since 1880s due to the flourishing economic relations of Iran with the West; ‘Aminie’ company was established in 1882 by Mashadi Kazem Amini; in 1886, ‘Commercial Company of Iran’ was founded; six years later, in 1892, ‘Mansurie’ company was formed; ‘Fars’ company came about in 1896; ‘Ettehad’, ‘Masudie’, and ‘Omumi’ were founded in 1897, 1898, and 1899 respectively (1963 in Issawi, 1971). Become acquainted with modern techniques of commerce and trade, the small group of merchants gradually withdrew from traditional bazaar and set their own business (Kian-Thiebaut, 1998). This growing participation of Iranian merchants in world capitalist market set the ground for the emergence of a nascent merchant bourgeoisie.

The reconfiguration of social classes in Iran was, furthermore, followed by displacement and relocation of the old spatiality in Tehran. Prior to the emergence of modernisation, the main unit of Tehran’s urban fabric was *mahalleh* (quarter). In spite of economic considerations, each mahalleh accommodated people from same ethnic and religion. In this light, one should recognise the ethno-religious factor rather than class lines as a major element of classification

of people in pre-modern Tehran (Gurney 1992, cited in Bayat, 2010). As the result, Tehran was divided to different *mahalleh* each of which contained both poor and rich.

This condition soon changed by the beginning of the urbanisation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As it is shown in the previous section, the meaning and application of land underwent a huge transformation in the course of modernisation. In the aftermath of the modernisation of Tehran, not only its urban fabric deeply changed but also its social relations were profoundly transformed. Subordinated to the western knowledge, urban consciousness introduced a new Haussmannian pattern of urban fabric to Tehran. Later on, the increasing urbanisation, accompanied by the delivery of windfall oil revenues, resulted in the supremacy of money culture in social relations and the commodification of land so that lands were understood as an asset to buy and sell. In this context, the underlying *mahalleh* system began to be demolished by this process of modernisation/urbanisation. In fact, the first signs of new inequalities emerged and started to be embodied within Tehran. Since then, if you had been rich you were able to buy a luxurious house in a very expensive area and if you had been poor you were expelled to shanties and shacks. In the aftermath of this polarisation, the economic order became predominant. This was the origin of a new dichotomy, that is, *Bala-y-Shahr/ Pain-e-Shahr* (upper city/ lower city) established mainly on the ground of land value. So, on the one hand, the north of Tehran with its vast green spaces and pleasant weather was conceived as a superior settlement and accommodated upper class and, on the other hand, south of Tehran in which polluting industries were housed, hosted subaltern groups included emigrants, non-skilled workers, and poor. Regardless of economic factors, there was also a social element underpinned the gulf between north and south. Living in the north came to be equated with higher social prestige, whereas, the south was seen to accommodate those inhabitants with lower social status.

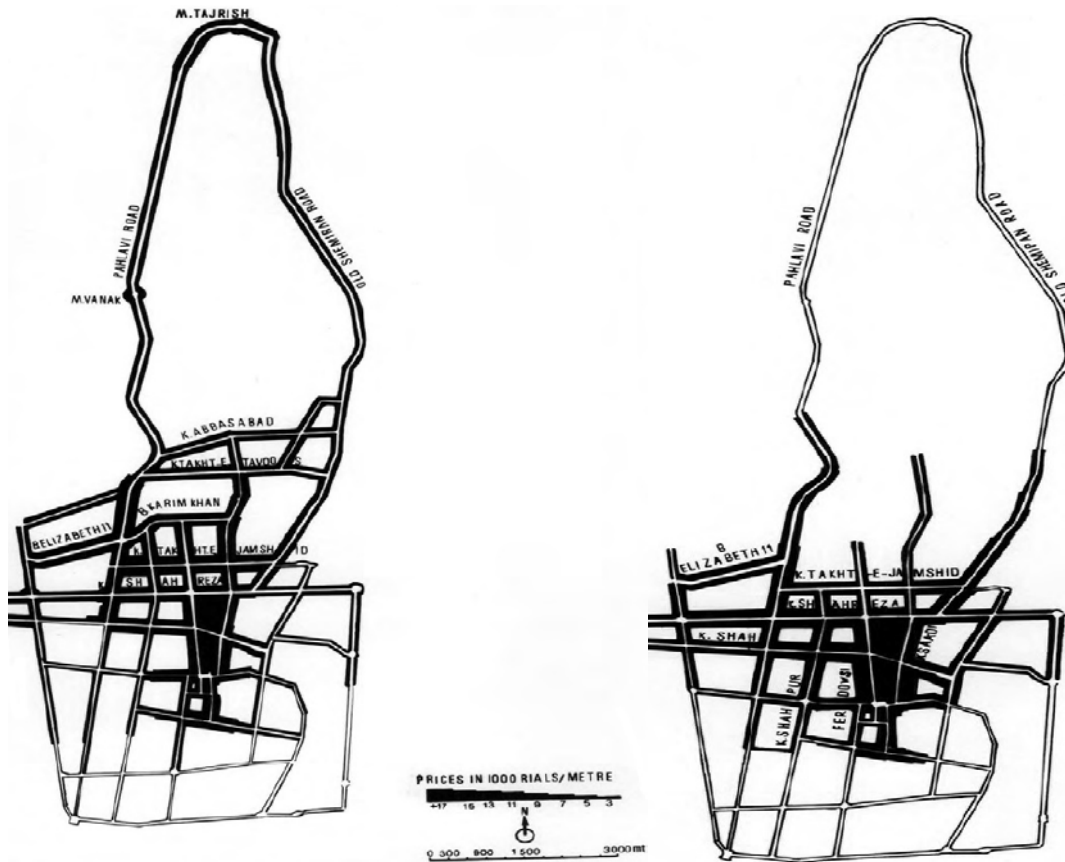
Thus, one must consider the emergence of the urbanisation as a focal moment in the reversal of the elementary unit of urban life in Tehran from the ethno-religious concept of *mahalleh* to the capitalistic one.

This emerging spatial composition became even more consolidated since mid-20<sup>th</sup> onward. By the acceleration of immigration from other provinces to Tehran, private investors played a more active role in modifying the spatial configuration of the city. It enhanced them to channel large sums of money into the construction sector. One of a few research conducted during 1960s on urban problematic reports that up to 70% of the finance of housing construction came from private hand. It, in turn, led to even more horizontal expansion of Tehran so that in the interval between 1890 and 1966 its area became almost 10 times bigger reached to 180 square kilometres (Bahrambeygui, 1977).

As it is expected, the investment of private individuals and companies got coupled with activities of public institutions turning Tehran to a site of capital circulation. Among public housing projects in this period we can name 400 *Dastgah*, literary means 400 housing units, in the east of Tehran financed by Mortgage Bank in 1949, *Tehran-e nou*, New Tehran, which was composed of one storey housed with four to five rooms also placed in the east in 1950. Both of these projects were supposed to be allocated to low-income inhabitants, but, later on were occupied by lower middle class families (Bahrambeygui, 1977: 119). These urban practices acted as a thrust to land value making a rapid increase in the price of residential plots. In the figure 1, Bahrambeygui presents this shift in land value within 12 years from 1959 to 1971. It is discernable that during this period northern land were more valorized:



**Figure 3-1: Land price in 1959 and 1971**



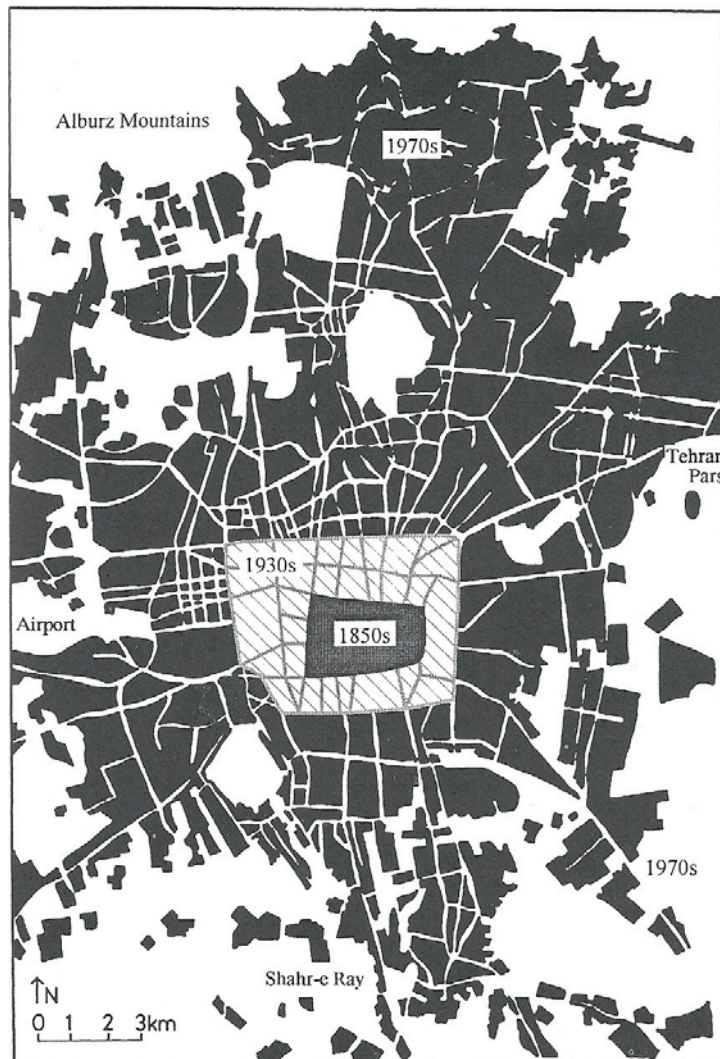
*Frontal land price in 1971*

*Frontal land price in 1959*

Moreover, in the absence of any systematic land regulation, urban developers and land speculators took over new vacant lands, particularly in the northern areas, began to turn agricultural fields and gardens to residential district. The mushrooming of suburbs around old Tehran boundaries must be read through this line. Naziabad in the south, Kan in the west, and 9<sup>th</sup> Aban in the southern west of Tehran are examples of this trend of suburbanization of the city in mid-1950 onwards. Further construction of roads and highways alongside the

improvement of public and private transportation aiming at connecting these fragmented suburbs to the centre of Tehran were to make it as an integrated city. This continuous construction and reconstruction resulted in more expansion of Tehran. Figure 3-2 demonstrates this rapid expansion revealing the incomparable growth of Tehran since 1930s.

**Figure 3-2: The expansion of Tehran**



(source: Madanipour, 1998:41)

In the same period, developmental projects of the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century turned Tehran to the first pole of commercial and industrial development. Having introduced seven-year

development plans in 1949, Tehran as the main locus of this rapid advancement underwent an unprecedented renovation. By 1960s, as Connell estimates, “two third of country’s GNP (outside oil) and %51 of industrial production were produced in Tehran” (Connell, 1973: 3). Furthermore, around %70 of non-oil industry was placed in Tehran too. By then, Tehran had become one of the most favourite places to investment by multi-national companies. Subsequently, some 3’000 million rials (£17 million) were invested in Iran, almost entirely in Tehran, by enterprises from 16 countries in 1970s (Connell, 1973: 3).

Industries and factories were mostly installed in the south and west of Tehran covering about 18.9 km<sup>2</sup> of its area (Bahrambeygui, 1977:106) led to the increasing disparity between the south and the north in which, on the one hand, unskilled labours in accompany with newly immigrated villagers were located either in southern neighbourhoods of Tehran or in satellite estates and shanty towns on the south and south-west belt of Tehran and, on the other hand, the north housed rich merchants, civil servants, experts, and businessmen together with some of Shah’s palaces. Connell observing changing Tehran in early 1970s describes it in his discussion paper as a Western-style metropolis:

“Economic reorientation, away from handicrafts into light industries, housing development and redevelopment and transport changes are all resulting in a changing city, as it gradually becomes closer in style to western metropolises.” (Connell, 1973: 17).

#### **3-5-4- The emergence and growth of satellite cities**

In a well-known passage of *The Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre elaborates on his celebrated notion of implosion-explosion emphasising that through urban revolution we have at once a tremendous concentration of urban reality and the immense explosion of numerous fragments into space; peripheries, suburbs, satellite towns, etc. (Lefebvre, 2003:14). It seems that the history of urbanisation of Tehran has undergone the same path. In the pervious section my effort was centred on the first part of this dual process, namely the concentration of people, activities, and wealth within formal boundaries of Tehran. Here, I would like to draw our attention to the latter.

Tehran in her early years in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was circumscribed by walls and ditches. Although in this embryonic period the social segregation of Tehran was based on ethno-tribal bonds, there were also a designated loci for the excluded who were not welcomed within the city's boundaries. Accommodated in the periphery and hitches, this group included prostitutes and thieves (Shahri, 1991). In the course of its transformation, however, Tehran shifted the logic and locality of this socio-spatial exclusion. This shift was in fact preceded by the transformation of meaning and value of land caused by domination of monetary relations and exchange value over use value. So, if in the first phase it was the power of political authority of Kings and their courts, in the second phase, with its culmination in mid-1970s, it was the power of capital which acted as a prime mover of excluding inhabitants. In the previous section, it is shown that how the integration of Iran into the global market affected the nature of land and resulted ultimately in the skyrocketing of land prices. This trend, as it is discussed, was intensified by injection of oil revenues into the urban fabric turning land into a financial asset to sell and buy. Nowadays being universal, this process of financialisation of land, has its root in Haussmannisation of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Paris where all workers, Lefebvre explains, who were considered active and productive

were deported into *banalieu*s, which were being located ever further away (Lefebvre, 2014: 203).

In the same vein, financialised Tehran expelled the poor working classes from the city centre. In his research, Piran shows that in one decade from 1966 to 1976 the number of households who were landlords in Tehran fell from 78% to 53% (Piran, 2001). Excluded Tehranis mainly consisted of two groups; first, rural immigrants who either had been landless from the beginning or had not been given any appropriate land plots sufficient for their subsistence. The latter was largely the products of agricultural land division of Land Reform programme of 1972. Urban poor made up the second group who were not able to deal with the rising expenditure of life in Tehran on top of which was increasing housing expense. Therefore, rural migrants and urban poor made up the central core of squatter settlements around Tehran.

The trend of peripherisation largely began in the 1950s when Tehran experienced a massive wave of immigration so that its population exceeded one million people. Seeking shelter, the newcomers settled in areas over the formal boundaries of Tehran. These informal settlements, such as *Moft abad* which literally means ‘free land’, were placed on the wasteland in the east of Tehran, and were generally occupied forcibly by the newcomers and enclosed by walls and fences.

The next wave of land occupation coincided with the accelerated change in the morphology of Tehran from the 1960s onward. Land reform, soaring oil revenues, industrial development, and rapid urbanisation are among the most important factors which catalysed this transformation. Davoodpour reports that between 1965 and 1975 Tehran’s urban infrastructure developed to the degree that it was able to accommodate 82% of new immigrants within its borders (Davoodpour, 2005: 108). This, however, could not happen without the expansion of peripheries and

construction of new neighbourhoods such as Narmak, Naziabad, Kan, 9<sup>th</sup> Aban which were intended to accommodate low income inhabitants. Despite the intention of urban planners to house varied socio-economic groups within Tehran's borders, the speculative activities along with financialisation of housing generated the reverse result. Rising ground rents expelled the lower working class from within Tehran, on the one hand, and kept the city gates shut on rural immigrants on the other hand.

The growth of informal settlements within a 50 kilometre radius of Tehran became more apparent in the 1970s. This trend was empowered by semi-organised forcible occupation of wastelands and quiet encroachment of the ordinary (Cf. Bayat, 1997). Moreover, there was a stratum of middle-range landowners whose plots did not fit the official state regulations in terms of land market mainly because their lands were outside of official designated borders of Tehran. In this respect, poor workers and rural immigrants were good targets for them to sell their plots in an informal land market. Having difficulty financially to find a place within the city on the other side, the lower classes took the bait to pay less at the expense of buying a piece of land 'unofficially'. A large share of these plots was composed of agricultural lands which were now parcelised and sold as a residential area. For, the sale of a small plot in an emerging land market benefited landowners more than agricultural output. During the ensuing years, the pace of residentialisation of agricultural lands in the countryside of Tehran, an economic research reports, accelerated so that the share of agricultural employment in the region of Tehran dropped from 4.86% to 2.95% between 1976 and 1996 respectively (Housing and Planning Ministry, 2000).

Furthermore, allocating south-eastern corridors of Tehran to industrial sites furnished the base for later immigrants to inhabit areas near to these factories. Manufacturing industries such as

cement, tobacco, crystal, and weapon factories, in the early years of their emergence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, were located at the immediate southern periphery of Tehran. Later on, further expansion of the city along with industrial development, however, made statesmen relocate these industrial factories further away from the residential cores of the city. This displacement, however, had unintended consequences namely the invasion of newcomers and expelled groups to settle around these sites in the hope of finding jobs.

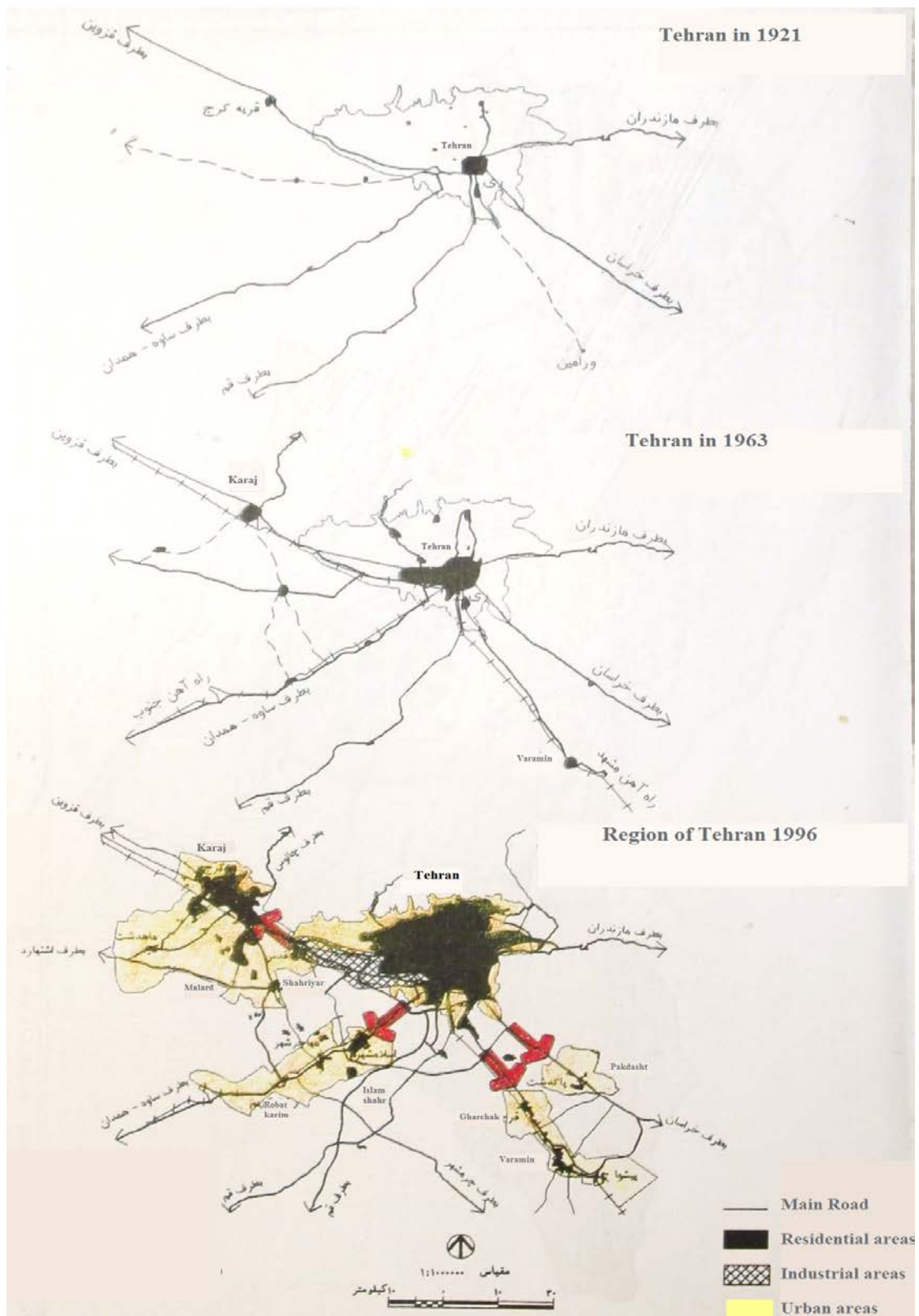
Therefore, poor dwellers employed various strategies from squatting in wastelands, buying plots in an unofficial market, or turning agricultural lands into residential ones to reside somewhere near Tehran. This, in turn, produced the primary core of satellite cities which in the following years grew rapidly. Over three decades, small villages and towns particularly at the south and south-west of Tehran were transformed into bigger residential settlements. Largely dependent on the city of Tehran, these growing settlements alongside the city of Tehran composed the 'region of Tehran' whose cities increased from four in 1956 to 15 and 25 in 1976 and 1996 respectively (Ghamami, 2007:2). Figure 3 sketches the creation and development of these new urban cores within the region of Tehran. As the figure presents these cores appeared in the 1960s and since then grew dramatically. The population of Karaj, a city on the east of Tehran, for instance, increased from 44,000 to one million between 1965 and 1996. In this regard, the appearance and subsequent growth of Islamshahr well exemplifies the transformation that the region of Tehran has undergone over the past 40 years.

Located within an 18 km radius from Tehran and 20 km away from industrial sites, there was a rural area which consisted of 10 small villages in the 1960s. The total population of this area was no more than 1,000 people at the time (Habibi, 1993). The first incident occurred in the early 1960s when the state decided to construct a dam in Karaj to meet the power supply of

Tehran. The construction of *Amirkabir dam*, however, had a disastrous consequence on the ecology of Islamshahr since the access of this area to water resources became highly limited during the dismantling of the irrigation system. This condition coupled with land reform and its resultant immigration led landowners to move toward speculative, instead of productive, activities. So, they parcelled up their agricultural lands and sold them to newcomers as residential plots. Against this background, an agricultural area transformed into a pseudo-urban one since there were no signs of any urban infrastructure. Lacking any job opportunities, Islamshahr grew 10% annually in accommodating over 50,000 people by 1976 (Habiti, 1993). Like in other satellite cities, the dwellers of Islamshahr, if they were lucky, worked as either unskilled labourers in Tehran or blue-collar workers in adjacent factories. Otherwise, they became street vendors or, alternatively, what Marx calls the reserve army of labour.



**Figure 3-3: The transformation of urban settlements within the region of Tehran**



The next shift happened when petrodollars entered into the national market. This money, however, flowed into land speculative activities and intensified conditions even further. In the following decade the rate of population growth of Islamshahr reached almost 23% making it, in the absence of proper urban infrastructure and job opportunities, a big dormitory area encompassing 300,000 people (Habibi, 1993: 67).

Davoodpour defines 'dormitory ratio' based on the spatial differentiation between working and sleeping. Accordingly, the dormitory ratio for Islamshahr was almost 100% which means almost all the workforce of Islamshahr had jobs in other places than where they resided (Davoodpour, 2005:106). Other urban settlements in the region of Tehran also showed high dormitory ratios; Karaj's, Shahriyar's, Varamin's, and Damavand's dormitory ratios were 100%, 50%, 80%, and 50% respectively (Ibid).

To sum up, it must be said that before the Islamic Revolution we witnessed two opposing tendencies. Until the 1960s, the city of Tehran was the destination of massive waves of immigrants. Even the state set the context, by constructing council houses and residential complexes, to accommodate these newcomers within Tehran's borders. However, from the 1960s onward, the trend reversed when the use value was defeated by exchange value and the logic of the market became dominant. Land reform and oil revenues played key roles increasing economic forces not only in impeding immigrants from entering the city but also in expelling lower classes from the city. This expelled group along with those newcomers did not have any other choice but to inhabit the nearest settlements around Tehran. This latter trend is clearly shown in the table below:

**Table 3-4: The population of the city of Tehran, region of Tehran, and Iran**

|  | <b>1966</b> | <b>1976</b> | <b>1986</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Total population of Iran</b>                        | 25 788 722  | 33 708 744  | 49 445 010  |
| <b>Population of region of Tehran</b>                  | 3 454 347   | 5 300 605   | 7 923 586   |
| <b>Population of the city of Tehran</b>                | 3 028 735   | 5 550 355   | 6 051 561   |
| <b>Ratio of region of Tehran to total population</b>   | 13.3%       | 15.7%       | 16%         |
| <b>Ratio of the city of Tehran to total population</b> | 11.7%       | 13.4%       | 12.2%       |
| <b>Ratio of region of Tehran to the city of Tehran</b> | 88%         | 86%         | 76%         |

(Source: Davoodpour, 2005)

### **3-6- Conclusion**

The history of Tehran begins by its appropriation by Qajar dynasty in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later on, the advancement in transportation systems and the development of communication technologies paved the way of incorporation of Iran into the world system. At the same time, the defeat of the Iranian state in a series of wars against Russian empire constituted a novel consciousness stressing a sense of backwardness among Iranian. Following this, the Qajar courtier found the solution for this backwardness in following European path of progress. This led to the projection of Western thoughts and policies on the ground of Iran.

In this chapter, I put my effort to show how this incorporation of Tehran into the world system transformed the meaning of the urban and its practices. I, also, aimed at shedding light on the implication of this new condition on the pre-revolutionary Tehran. Drawing on the Lefebvrian conceptual framework, it was discussed that during this period the relation between town and country reversed. This was mainly because of the growth of the international trade so that the country, that had once been an independent self-sufficient unit, began to produce for city centres. Moreover, consumption found an unprecedented significance and subsequently took over production. The result was the substitution of the subsistence farming with the cash crops one. Hence was the proliferation of Western consuming products in Tehran's markets.

While applying Lefebvre's theory, the thesis emphasises on the historical differences between Iran and the West. First of all, unlike the feudalist background of Western countries in which the centre of production and the centre of power had been concentrated in the country, in Iran the power apparatus was founded in cities separating itself from the loci of production in the country. The condition of possibility of this separation relies on the existence of absentee landlords which was one of the marked characteristics of Iranian peasantry. Owning vast parts of agricultural lands, absentee landlords usually lived in cities. They also acted as mediators between country and town by transferring surplus products of the countryside to cities. This, furthermore, helped the reversal from the country to the city. As a result, if within the social whole it was the country that was predominant, since late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was subordinated to the requirement of the city.

Secondly, in the absence of an actual bourgeois class, the role of the state in moulding space became essential. Against this background, the Pahlavi state put on the agenda a series of modernising projects that profoundly transformed the space of Tehran. Not only did it include

the urban projects, but also forming an organic modern bureaucratic class along with its inherent institutions. In this case, therefore, we must talk about a particular ‘state mode of production’ in which the state forms classes rather than vice versa. In effect, this state mode of production sought to pave way for the creation and advancement of capitalist relations including forging a national integrated market, the prevalence of wage labour, and free movement of goods and labour power, or as Harvey nicely put, to solve the issue of absorbing of capital and labour surpluses by means of investment in physical and social infrastructure (Harvey, 1985, 1989).

Furthermore, as this chapter discussed, the discovery of oil, as the third difference, triggered the process of dismantling the town-country relations. Oil revenues led to the relative independence of the city from the economic surplus of the country. Ultimately, it was shown, the town-country binary was replaced by a novel binary of centre-periphery.

In summary, the chapter showed that this emerging condition has set the context for the process of commodification and, in Lefebvrian language, fetishism of land. Moreover, Tehran witnessed an occurrence of diminishing of *mahalleh* (neighbourhood) as the old constitutive unit of the city in pre-history of urbanisation. Finally, the emergence of satellite cities, as the consequence of this urbanisation, was highlighted. Following the process of financialisation of land, the modern production of Tehran, resulted in what Lefebvre calls the deportation of low-income workers into *banalieux*, which were being located ever further away (Lefebvre, 2014: 203). This expelled group along with those new comers did not have any other choice but to inhabit in the nearest settlements around Tehran. Like most of other informal settlements, the growth of informal settlements in Tehran ensued the increase of commodification of lands and its resultant speculative housing. This is a global trend as Lefebvre, Harvey, Smith, and other critical urban thinker have already shown. But, the specificity of this process lies on the

particular structure of Iran's economy. While in the global north, as Harvey argued (1989), the crisis in the first circuit of capital, that is manufacturing production, causes the transference of capital into the second circuit, that is housing and construction sector, Iran's has gone through different path. For, the relatively undeveloped industrial infrastructure has not let the first circuit of capital to be developed to the extent that is necessary for extracting surplus value. In other words, the presupposition of political economy of Western urban studies has never occurred in the context of Iran's economy. There is, however, another factor emerged in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century compensated the shortage of the first circuit in extracting surplus value. The nationalisation of oil industry in 1953 provided Iran with a huge amount of windfall revenue in the ensuing years. The malfunction of industrial production ultimately led the petrodollar to be absorbed in construction and housing sectors. Hence, is the proliferation of urban projects since 1960s onward

# **Chapter 4: The War**

**Period:**

**Revolutionary Islamification**

## **Revolutionary Islamification: The emergence of political Islam**

“In addition to your material life we also want to empower your spiritual life. You need spirituality. Our spirituality is gone by them. Do not get satisfied with that we construct houses, make free electricity and water, make free public transportation. We exalt your spirituality, we exalt you to the level of humanity. ... these resources are nation’s property, they belong to people, to the dispossessed. I decree that give them to the dispossessed and they will do that.

We have ideas about banks so that they can come out of this inert situation, this colonial situation... they must be transformed into an Islamic thing. Now they have foreign forms, alien forms... Do not look for Western forms. That we keep looking for Western forms has brought misery to our lives. Our jurisprudence is Western, our legislation is Western. Those who desire Western form over divine form do not know anything about Islam... we will change TV programs, cinemas. They all must work in the Islamic way. Islamic advertisement, Islamic ministries, Islamic canon law.”

### **Khomeini’s speech in March 1979**

In the previous chapter, I attempted to set the context against which the Islamic revolution occurred. It was shown that Tehran since its construction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, underwent a tremendous transformation. In this regard, three events were highlighted as the main causes of this transformation. The first incident occurred in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the result of the integration of Iran into the global order. In this moment, the country began to produce for city markets as the logic of trade had prevailed. The type of agricultural products, therefore, changed from subsistence products to cash crops. Moreover, at this time production was replaced with consumption and use value with exchange value. It was explained that the incorporation of Iran



into the global order eventually led to the reversal of the relationship between the country and the urban.

The second event was the emergence of a modern nation-state in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Coupled with the oil discovery and its subsequent revenue, the third factor, it enabled the urban to be relatively independent from economic surplus of the countryside. Having the ideal of a western city, the authoritarian state of Pahlavi introduced a series of urban projects into Tehran. As it was mentioned in the last chapter, this new condition put Tehran at the centre of production and power peripheralised even further the countryside by subjecting it into its will and logic. Hence was the advent of a new binary based on centre-periphery relationship.

Against this background, Tehran found a unique status as a centre of power and modernisation. Neglecting the religious root of the society, this emerging condition made its own dissidents with varied roots from Islamic ideology and leftist guerrillas to nationalists and poor classes. The following chapter is an endeavour to reveal the reaction of the these dissidents to abovementioned emerging condition of the Pahlavi period. This reaction is reconstructed through a Lefebvrian perspective since it enables us at once to recognise the condition of emergence of the new Islamic epoch and to grasp the transformation of it through its immanent contradictions.

#### **4-1- Political Economy of the Revolution**

Immediately after the 1979 Revolution, Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, gave a speech in which the goals of the revolution were laid out. In accordance with the central revolutionaries' slogan, "Neither West, nor East, just Islamic Republic", Khomeini set up an ideological basis for the state; 'the state of dispossessed'. Drawing on a verse from the Qur'an,

“And we desired to bestow a favour upon the dispossessed of the world, and to make them the leaders of, and the heirs to the world” (Chapter 28, Verse 5), Khomeini’s state of the dispossessed was the first step toward the emergence of political Islam. Accordingly, the post-revolutionary government, as the negation of the former regime, found its root in two principles; first to be revolutionary, and secondly to Islamise every single sphere of people’s lives. Here, I wish to examine these two principles and present their meanings, forms, and functions within Iranian post-revolutionary context.

Like any other revolution, the Iranian one was consisted of various, to some degree conflicting, forces, from guerilla lefty parties and radical Islamists to liberal nationalist and Bazaar<sup>1</sup> conservatives. Having found a common enemy, these heterogeneous crowds made a united front to oppose the status quo. After the revolution, however, the revolutionary Islamists got the upper hand and sought to fill the power vacuum. To do so, they were required to keep the situation revolutionary so that they could maintain their authority over other rivals. It seems they had learned Lefebvre’s lesson that “a revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential” (Lefebvre, 1991: 54). In the same vein, the new conquerors revolutionised space in order to promote Islamic relations within the fabric of Iranian cities. To enclose the revolutionary characteristics of the post-revolutionary spaces I begin with the transformations brought about by Islamist revolutionaries immediately after the 1979 revolution in the field of legislation. There is no need to say that in the Lefebvrian sense of space, as is the subject of this study, legislation and law are not out of space. Ontologically, they are constituent parts of it and, if one takes space as a totality as Lefebvre does, legislation and law, as the parts of the

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<sup>1</sup> - Bazaar is an Iranian market place<sup>4</sup> that has historically been one of the key elements of the city life. Merchants who worked in Bazaars played an important role in different episodes of Iranian history.

whole, would come into dialectical relationship with space. Therefore, the new set of laws was expected to revolutionise space after the Islamic revolution.

I would like to begin with the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran enacted in 1979. In Article 44 we have:

“The economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to consist of three sectors: state, cooperative, and private, and is to be based on systematic and sound planning. The state sector is to include all large-scale and mother industries, foreign trade, major minerals, banking, insurance, power generation, dams and large-scale irrigation networks, radio and television, post, telegraph and telephone services, aviation, shipping, roads, railroads and the like; all these will be publicly owned and administered by the State. The cooperative sector is to include cooperative companies and enterprises concerned with production and distribution, in urban and rural areas, in accordance with Islamic criteria. The private sector consists of those activities concerned with agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and services that *supplement the economic activities of the state and cooperative sectors*. Ownership in each of these three sectors is protected by the laws of the Islamic Republic, in so far as this ownership is in conformity with the other articles of this chapter, does not go beyond the bounds of Islamic law, contributes to the economic growth and progress of the country, and does not harm society”. (Italics are mine)

What follows from Article 44 is the supplementary role of the private sector in the economic activities. On the other hand, the public sector almost fully occupies the major strategic industries. Taking into account the economic situation of the Shah period, the former regime, the revolutionary demand for social justice would seem more sensible. Toward the end of the Shah regime, the growth of capitalist modes of production and the formation of a new national bourgeois class became more apparent than ever. Two effective factors that set the context for the growth of such relationships can be recognised. First, the land reforms of the Shah in 1963 and, secondly, the increase in the oil price in global markets. While the former changed the

mode of property ownership, from ground rent to bourgeois private property, the latter provided the state with windfall revenues to proceed with its industrial ambitions to bring Iran into “the gate of civilization”.

The result was an increase in the number of wage labourers (Table 4-1):

**Table 4-1: The number of wage labourers**

|                                | <b>1962</b> | <b>1977</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Number</b> (×1000)          | 1372        | 3300        |
| <b>Percentage of the total</b> | 20.6%       | 33.2%       |

(Source: Soudagar, 1989)

Moreover, the last decade of the Shah period evidenced the rapid growth of the private sector too. The investment of the private sector, for instance, in the fifth development plan (1973-1977) increased to 158 million Toman (\$22.57 million) which accounts for 33.6% of the total investment of the plan (Soudagar, 1989). Within 17 years from 1958 the number of private banks rose to 28 and the sum of their savings was about 11.84 billion Toman (\$1.69 billion) which accounts for 62.2% of the total banks’ savings (Soudagare, 1989).

The expansion of capitalism accompanied by growing class conflict made the demand for social justice one of the major promises of the revolution. Nowhere is this demand for social justice better expressed than in Article 43 of the constitution:

“... [I]n order to eradicate poverty and deprivation, the economy of Islamic Republic of Iran is based on:

1. To satisfy the necessary needs for everyone: housing, food, cloth, health care, education, and necessary requirements for establishing a family
2. To prepare job opportunities for all people in order to meet the condition of full employment...”

As is made clear, one of the goals of the revolution was to provide Iranians with the conditions to meet their basic needs. In other words, the aim was to diminish, if not to eliminate, the class discrimination. Assuring that the demand for social justice would materialise on the ground, the revolutionary government put into effect a series of nationalisations of large industries and financial institutions.

#### **4-1-1- Nationalisation**

One month after the revolution, on 5 March 1979, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) took over all activities in the field of oil and gas industries. Two weeks later, all agreements with international consortiums were unilaterally cancelled by the NIOC. Then, it decided to decrease oil production from 6 Million Barrels per Day (MBD) to 4 MBD with an export target of 3.4 MBD (Rahnama, 1990).

Following this, in June 1979, there was a massive nationalisation regarding financial institutions. First, the Council of Revolution nationalised 27 private banks, of which 13 were joint ventures with foreign share holdings (Rahnama, 1990). Prior to the revolution the savings of these banks accounted for 62.2% of the total savings of banks. Then there was a plan to integrate the banking system which ultimately resulted in merging 36 banks into 10 national banks, namely Industry and Mines Bank, Housing and Construction Bank, Agriculture Bank, Commercial Banks (six banks), and Central Bank.

It was also in accordance with the revolutionary demand, accentuated in Article 43 of the constitution, to be economically independent from West and East. Furthermore, in the same month, 15 private insurance companies were nationalised by the revolutionary government. Nationalisation of banks and insurance institutions was the first step toward a usury-free banking system that was in tune with the Islamic economy. In fact, to harmonise economic regulation with the Islamic codes was one of the main preoccupations of those young revolutionaries who had already occupied official positions (e.g. examine Mohsen Norbaksh's, the head of Central Bank at the time, interview with Amouei (Amouei, 2006). A few years later, in 1983, the law of an interest-free banking system was finally brought into effect by parliament to eliminate interest and forbid banks to charge customers. The law of interest-free banking holds that the aim is "to establish a fiscal and credit system in accordance with divine right and justice (and Islamic regulation) in order to circulate money and credit in a way that results in economic growth" (Majles Report, 1983).

In the same light, in May 1980, the Council of Revolution announced the nationalisation of foreign trade. The aim was to strike a balance between domestic and foreign trades by monopolising the importation of goods. The decision over the nationalisation of foreign trade would be more interesting if one takes into account the volume of importation by the private sector prior to the revolution. Between 1972 and 1977, the share of the private sector in importation was \$40.9 billion which accounts for 49.8% of total imports (Razaghi, 1996: 645). However, to nationalise foreign trade, procurement and distribution centres were established after the revolution. These centres were administered by a revolutionary board of directors whose members were appointed by the government. However, these centres set the context for growing a nouveau riche class who benefited from the gap between subsidised and market

prices. They provided goods from distribution centres at subsidised prices and sold them to customers at market prices which were two or, in some cases, three times more than the former. Later, I will come back to the class mobility after the revolution.

Having dealt with the financial activities and foreign trade, now I would like to draw attention to industrial realm to complete the triple process of nationalisation. Industry underwent the same process too. Immediately after the revolution, oil, gas, railways, electricity power, fishing industries, along with the forest and jungle were nationalised. Then, aiming at taking over large-scale industries, the Council of Revolution passed the “Law of the Protection and Development of Iranian Industries” in July 1979 targeting three types of industries to nationalise:

- A) Metal production industries with large usage (steel, copper, and aluminium) and ship, airplane, and automobile production and assemblage
- B) Industries and mines whose owners’ liabilities exceeded their net assets and those which were indebted to the banks or people
- C) Industries belonging to individuals whose owners had illegally through association with the Shah regime acquired their wealth (Majles Reports, 1979)

Clause C was the most controversial since it gave the state the permission to confiscate the properties of 52 individuals whose owners formed the main body of privately owned industries before the revolution.

In the preface of this law, it is mentioned that it had multiple purposes:

1. To secure the Islamic system in regard to labour rights
2. To make the economy independent from oil revenues
3. To develop job opportunities

4. To cut off the relations of agents of the monarchy and the colonists to the economy
5. To support non-governmental activities and initiatives of the private sector and to prevent statism (Majles Reports, 1979)

Soon after, the next step to holding sway in the economic field arrived. This was the “Law of Management”. According to the Law of Management, the state must assign a manager and a board of directors for those factories and firms that are not running well. Regardless of the root of the problems, whether it be the escape of owners and managers of those firms or the financial difficulties, some 600 plants were nationalised in the first step (Sahabi’s interview with Amouei, 2006). However, Sahabi, the head of Plan and Budget Organisation at the time, believed that the intention was to nationalise merely management and not ownership of these companies (Amouei, 2006). Whatever the intention, in practice, a large portion of Iranian industries went into the hands of the state (Table 4-2)

**Table 4-2 : Private and Public capital in Industry (Million toman)**

|                               | <b>Public capital</b> | <b>Private capital (small or rural industries)</b> | <b>Private capital (medium or big industries)</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|--------------|
| <b>Before nationalisation</b> | 70.39                 | 28.43  | 79.5  | 178.3        |
| <b>After nationalisation</b>  | 126                   | 28.43  | 23.85   | 178.3        |

(Source: Soudagar, 1989)



As the above table shows, in the early period of the revolution, some 55.65 million Toman (\$7.95 million), that is almost 70% of the total capital of the private sector in medium and big industries, (oil industry not included) was nationalised.

Nationalisation of industries raised a question over the ownership and administration of them. This leads us to the next section which is the rise of revolutionary institutions.

#### **4-1-2- Revolutionary institutions:**

From the outset of the revolution there was a mushroom growth of revolutionary institutions. From Sepah-e Pasdaran (Army of the Guardians), the Economic Mobilisation Committee, and the Board of Projects of the First Decade of the revolution, to the Dispossessed Foundation and Foundation of Martyrs, and to the Council of Cultural Revolution, the new revolutionary government was to occupy and control every single realm of its citizens' lives. Economically, the massive confiscation of firms and factories and the expropriation of lands demanded a new revolutionary apparatus to run them. Following this, a big part of confiscated properties was made over to two organisations; The Organisation of Iranian National Industries (OINI) and the Dispossessed Foundation. As a result of the implementation of the Law of the Protection and Development of Iranian Industries, 462 production and trade units were taken over by OINI (Central Bank, 1979 in Razaghi, 1992: 416). Furthermore, based on verdicts of revolutionary courts the ownership of several firms and organisations was handed to the Dispossessed Foundation. Table 3 below, listing fields and numbers of companies that went under the control of the Dispossessed Foundation, is illustrative in terms of the scope of the functions of such revolutionary institutions.

**Table 4-3: The Dispossessed Foundation  
assets after the revolution**

| Field                | Number |
|----------------------|--------|
| Airplane company     | 9      |
| Trade company        | 250    |
| Factory              | 140    |
| Mine                 | 200    |
| Construction company | 50     |
| Production units     | 5000   |
| Real estate          | 20000  |

(Source: Razaghi, 1992: 426)

By 1982, as Soudagar has listed, there were 938 factories that had been handed over to the new revolutionary institutions and organisations by virtue of nationalisation of industries (Table 4-4).

Moreover, there were two more incidents that resulted in reinforcing statism in the early period of the revolution. The first was the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran nine months after the revolution and the second, occurring about one year later, was the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988).

**Table 4-4: Confiscated factories**

| <b>Institution</b>                          | <b>Number of factories</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Organisation of Iranian National Industries | 362                        |
| National Organisation of Development        | 112                        |
| Dispossessed Foundation                     | 242                        |
| Iranian National Petrochemical Company      | 7                          |
| Heavy Industries Ministry                   | 94                         |
| Foundation of Martyr                        | 56                         |
| Iranian National Steel Company              | 13                         |
| Sadough Foundation                          | 3                          |
| Protection of Industries Committee          | 9                          |
| 6738 Bill of the Council of Revolution      | 40                         |

(Source: Soudagar, 1989)

Legitimising the presence of state, these two incidents furnished the basis for a revolutionary space in which the state was the key, and almost the only player in the political, economic, and cultural domain of Iran. As a result, for some eight years the fate of Iranians was subjected to the will of the revolutionary state. In addition to the above-mentioned institutions, the occurrence of each new situation demanded a new revolutionary establishment to deal with it. Hence the Housing Foundation and the Economic Mobilisation Committee were established. The former was supposed to deal with the housing problems and the latter was in charge of regulating the economic problems intensified by a new set of economic sanctions imposed by

the USA after the occupation of its embassy. I will get involved with the Housing Foundation in a separate section, but here I would like to elaborate the extent of the Economic Mobilisation Committee since it channeled the economic activities for approximately nine years.

In the wake of the revolution, not only did statesmen of the former regime but also those who were economically influential flee from the country. This resulted in the flight of huge amounts of money and capital. The occupation of the US embassy made the situation significantly worse since it blocked the current of foreign investments and loans, and imposed a set of economic sanctions against the new revolutionary state; among them the oil embargo was the most effective one. Table 5 below clearly shows this flight of foreign capital after the revolution.

**Table 4-5: Foreign investment (\$M toman)**

| <b>Type of investment</b>                                 | <b>1975</b> | <b>1976</b> | <b>1977</b> | <b>1978</b> | <b>1979</b><br>(Revolution<br>year) | <b>1980</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Foreign loan and credit</b>                            | 300         | 560         | 1500        | 620         | 3                                   | 4           |
| <b>Private foreign loan and capital</b>                   | 660         | 620         | 1570        | 550         | 170                                 | 5           |
| <b>The flight of private foreign<br/>loan and capital</b> | -250        | -130        | -560        | -2440       | -290                                | -20         |

(Source: Central Bank, Economic Reports in Razaghi 1996)

The flight of capital, the blockage of foreign investments, alongside the US sanctions, did not leave any other choice for Iranian statesmen other than imposing a policy of economic austerity

on Iranian lives in the period of the war. This was the logic behind the constitution of the Economic Mobilisation Committee established in 1980.

The Committee found the solution in the modification of consumption patterns. To do so, it defined a rationing system according to which essential goods such as sugar, meat, vegetables, clothing, petrol etc. were to be provided by the state and be distributed among people under the supervision of the Committee. So, local mosques became the centres of distribution of ration cards (Rahnama, 1990). The Committee, also, was in charge of price-fixing since controlling the market price was necessary.

Economic Mobilisation Committee ruled over the economic sphere for the whole war period and even some years after that. In conclusion, from the Dispossessed Foundation to the Economic Mobilisation Committee, revolutionary institutions governed the politico-economic scene in Iran for almost 10 years. Although revolutionary situations, in addition to the Iran-Iraq war and US sanctions, called for a great deal of state intervention, the revolutionaries' ideal of a "Classless Society of Divine Unity" (Behdad, 1988) was also at work to give the state the permission to subject the society to its own will.

Having explained the revolutionary situation and its consequences on economic activities, in the next section, I will deal with the urban problem within the first decade of the revolution. In this regard, I will be focusing more on the housing question.

### 4-1-3- Urban problematic

The opening passage of *The urban revolution* begins with this sentence: “society has been completely urbanized” (Lefebvre, 2003: 1). Although ‘completely urbanized society’ is a virtual object, to be accomplished in the future, today the domination of urban relations is indisputable. “[T]he ‘implosion-explosion’ of the city is at present deepening. The urban phenomenon extends over large part of the territory... urban society and life penetrate the countryside” (Lefebvre, 1996: 71-72). The proliferation of the urban fabric, at the same time, gives urgency to the urban question. If we follow Castells (1977) in defining the urban as a medium of collective consumption then the issue of public services, and among them the housing question, is given an immediate urgency to be answered by the authority. In the same vein, the revolutionary state was faced with the housing question from the outset. In what follows, I elaborate on the way in which the revolutionary state gets involved with the housing problem. Looking for a state for the dispossessed, the leader of the revolution was now confronted with a huge wave of migrants coming from nearby towns and villages to Tehran in search of a better life. As statistics show, housing conditions had become worse toward the end of the previous regime since there was only one residential unit available for 1.5 households (Table 4-6).

**Table 4-6: Housing conditions in Tehran 1976 (1000 people)**

| Year | Population | Number of households | Number of residential units | Household/unit |
|------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1976 | 4530       | 982                  | 665                         | 1.48           |

(Source: Rafiei, 1989)

In addition, as it had become difficult for the lower classes to cope with financial conditions in Tehran, and housing expenditure in particular, there was a tendency for migrants to inhabit in spontaneous residential settlements near Tehran. Because of this, there was a trend of a slow encroachment of satellite cities around Tehran in the 1960s and 1970s. Together with the city of Tehran, these newly built satellite towns, which were nothing but big dormitories, made Tehran as a big conurbation. To see what the answer of the revolution was for this conurbation we must begin with the level of representation. Following this, I shall touch upon laws and regulations passed by the revolutionary institutions, on the one hand, and spatial practices regarding to the land problem, on the other hand. Then, the introduction of Islamic ideology and its materialisation will be at the centre of this chapter. Finally, the space of resistance as the act of inhabitants at the level of individual is reviewed. It is hoped that the dialectical interactions between the active forces of these three domains, namely spatial representation and practices, Islamification, and rebellion acts would represent the production of Tehran in the first decade of the revolution.

#### **4-1-3-1- The level of legislation**

On the eve of the revolution, Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, sent a message to the people expressing his determination to solve the housing problem:

“... in the past loathed regime housing problem was one of the catastrophic social issues of our people. A big part of the society carried a huge burden of debt from banks, speculators, and exploiters throughout their lifespans in order to provide a small piece of land and a tiny shelter for their families. A big portion of the dispossessed was completely deprived of any home and lived in shanty towns and slums. ... Islamic system does not stand this cruelty and discrimination. It is everyone’s right to have a home. The land problem must be overcome... all

the deprived must be provided with homes. No one across our territory should be deprived of a home.” (Majles Reports, 1979)

At the end of his letter, Khomeini, ordered an account to be opened, so-called Account Number 100, in the National Bank, to be allocated for the housing issue. He also asked the Dispossessed Foundation to join this project and help the dispossessed to become homeowners by having access to Pahlavi’s confiscated properties which, at the time, were at the disposal of the Foundation. Later on, the Housing Foundation came into existence to resolve the housing issue especially for the dispossessed. Ayatollah Khosrothe Shahi, the head of the Housing Foundation at the time, “demanded the permission to confiscate empty houses and apartments and to control rents and property transactions” (Rahnama, 1990). According to a survey conducted by the Housing Foundation in 1979, there were 200,000 empty dwellings in Tehran (Rahnama, 1990).

So, the housing issue had become a challenge for the new government to prove its faith in the promises of the revolution. Having been faced with a shortage of more than three million units and soaring housing prices in 1988 (Kiafar, in Gheissar, 1997) the revolutionary state did not find any other solution but to take over the housing market. In May 1979, the law of “Nullification of the Ownership of Urban Mavaat<sup>1</sup> Land” (NOUML) was<sup>5</sup> passed by the Council of Revolution aiming at nationalising urban wasteland:

“Since in accordance with Islamic principle Mavaat land is not recognised as a personal property, it must be in the hand of the Islamic government. The ownership documents issued by the former regime for Mavaat lands within or outside the city limits are against Islamic principle and public interest.” (Majles Report, 1979)

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<sup>1</sup> Wasteland which has no cultivation<sup>5</sup> history



The plan was to divide big lands into pieces and give them to the needy. A few months later, the Urban Land Development Organisation of Tehran was established to administer these newly nationalised lands.

Upon the taking over of a vast area of urban lands, the Islamic regime was determined to carry on with this policy. The “Law for the Revival and Transfer of Arable Lands” came thereafter. In tune with the ideals of social justice, it was to take over lands from big landlords and the Shah’s associates and distribute them between medium size and petty landlords, particularly those without land. So, in addition to the lands which belonged to members of the former regime and relatives of the Shah, large-size lands owned by high-ranking peasants were also divided and handed over to peasants in lower strata. The area of distributed lands is estimated by Ashraf at 245,000 hectares (Ashraf, 1982). Moreover, there were 850000 more hectares of disputed lands that were temporarily distributed between peasants (Ashraf, 1982).

Following this, in early 1980, the Council of Revolution passed another controversial law. The “Law of Using Empty Apartments to Dwell Homeless People” (Majles Reports, 1980). According to this law, the Housing Foundation was put in charge to buy vacant low- and medium-price flats. The Housing Foundation, also, took command of all ownerless flats and apartments and rented them out to legitimate applicants. The goal here was to take control over the housing market so that speculation on land and apartments could be hindered. The revolutionary government hoped that by controlling the housing market it would be able to deal with the housing scarcity through dispossession of a few wealthy owners in order to serve poor and homeless people. Six months later, this law was supplemented with the establishment of the “Housing Transaction Office”. It is mentioned in the statutory instrument of the Office that: “The Housing Transaction Office is in charge to regulate the housing market and to exert the

policy of price controlling on residential units in order to facilitate the housing market” (Majles Report, 1981). Since then, all transactions of residential units in Tehran had exclusively to be done under the supervision of the Office. To do so, there were 10 branches of the Office in Tehran placed in different zones of the city to identify vacant units, and buy them from their owners. Then the branches were to identify legitimate applicants, homeless in particular, and sell or rent them those flats at a given price through instalments. The Central Bank was also dragged into this project by providing the Housing Foundation with 2 billion toman.

It seems necessary to me to emphasise, however, that this radical desire for massive confiscation and nationalisation was not the only tendency within the revolutionary period. There was also a type of conservative tendency that came into existence immediately after the overthrow of the old regime which defended the right of private property and stood against nationalisation and distribution of big-size lands. This conservative approach was largely supported by *Maraje*<sup>1</sup> and traditional *ulama*<sup>1</sup> who occupied the Guardian Council after the revolution. Drawing on a verse of the Qur'an, they referred to the sanctity of private ownership in Islamic law. As a result of their resistance, the Housing Transaction Office was dissolved in 1981 and the Housing Foundation integrated into the Housing Ministry and became part of the state. In the same light, the Guardian Council rejected one article of the Law for the Revival and Transfer of Arable Lands which refers to the maximum area of land each landlord is permitted to keep. This tension between the revolutionary parliament and the conservative Guardian Council went on until the

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<sup>1</sup> *Maraje*' are those high rank Shi<sup>6</sup> clergies who have the right to interpret the Qur'an and their interpretation must be obeyed by their Muslim followers if they are to perform Islamic ritual.

<sup>1</sup> - *ulama* are high rank Shi' clergies without the right to interpret the Qur'an for other Muslims. In Shi' hierarchy they are one rank below *Maraje*'. But this religious hierarchy does not necessarily match with political hierarchy.

end of the first decade after the revolution when the consequences of the Iran-Iraq war obliged statesmen to introduce another set of policies.

However, not happy with the rejection of its bill by the Guardian Council, Parliament passed another bill called the “Urban Lands Law” in 1982 which, in practice, was an extension to the Law of Nullification of the Ownership of Urban Mavaat Lands (NOUML). Following the revolutionary promise of providing a home for every single Iranian family, the aim here was to bring all unimproved big areas within cities under the control of the state in order to divide them into pieces and give them to homeless people. In Article 1 of this law we have that Urban Lands Law:

“[Is enacted] to achieve the objectives of principles 31, 43, 45, and 47 of the Constitution that has made provision of housing and urban public utilities. The Law is to prevent speculation on lands as a commodity...” (Majles Reports, 1982)

Accordingly, in addition to all mavaat lands, which were the subject of NOUML law, also a big part of baayer<sup>1</sup> lands became nationalised. So, the Urban Lands Law imposed a ceiling on baayer lands that was 1000 m<sup>2</sup> more than that which would be transferred to the state. Also, “all land parcels remaining in the hands of owners must be improved within three years according to the Urban Lands Law, otherwise they would be confiscated by the state” (Kiafar, in Gheissar, 1997). This was the last law in the early period of the revolution spreading public ownership and expanding the power of the state through the urban problem. As it is summarised in the table below, within four years most urban lands within the boundaries of Tehran were nationalised.

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<sup>1</sup> - Baayer lands are those fallow lands that have been improved or farmed at some point. But then gradually turned into waste land.

**Table 4-7: Urban Lands Laws**

| <b>Name of the law</b>                               | <b>Year</b>   |
|--|---------------|
| Housing Foundation                                   | March 1979    |
| Nullification of the Ownership of Urban Mavaat Lands | April 1979    |
| Revival and Transfer of Arable Lands                 | August 1979   |
| Using Empty Apartments to Dwell Homeless People      | December 1979 |
| Housing Transaction Office                           | May 1980      |
| Urban Lands Law                                      | March 1982    |

Although in the ensuing years this radical tendency receded, the more moderate version of it remained dominant over the first decade of the revolution. Not satisfied with the implementation of such laws, revolutionaries were looking for a way to set in motion the omnipresent panopticon of state apparatus. External causes, also, came across to legitimise this totalitarian attitude toward internal affairs. Economically paralysed, US sanctions, particularly the oil exportation sanction, along with the huge expenditure of the Iran-Iraq war, gave the revolutionary state the permission to suppress any opposing movements within its boundaries.

This extension of the state apparatus realised through abovementioned laws and legislations, once again reminds us the validity of the concept of ‘the state mode of production’ (Lefebvre, 2009). The modern state, Lefebvre contends, produces its own space to deal with its contradictions and to overcome its crises (Lefebvre, 1976). This line of argument, however,

goes counter to the Althusserian believes in the supremacy of economic instance over other instances. In particular, the role political processes and institutions play, if not more, are at least as important as the one economy does.

There is, however, an extension to Lefebvre’s idea of the state mode of production when it is to apply on the context of Tehran, in particular in the first decade of the revolution. While Lefebvre (2009: 111) defines his concept as the management and control of state over space to maintain the ideal of economic growth of capitalist society, the revolutionary ideal of justice and equality of the post-revolutionary Tehran gave the state another meaning and function. Far away from being “a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (Marx, 2002: 221), the state worked relatively independent from the logic of capital. As a negation of the past period, the revolutionary state was more at the service of the dispossessed following the logic of classless society.

Before proceeding to this political conflict, I would like to present the manifestation of urban projects in the course of the first decade of the revolution. In other words, I wish to get involved with the level of reality to see what actually occurred on the ground.

**4-1-3-2- Level of Materialisation**

A study on housing characteristics in 1989 shows that the demand for social justice materialised through redistributive policy made a relative improvement in the housing situation.

**Table 4-8: Housing conditions in Tehran in 1976 and 1986 (1000 people)**

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|             | <b>Population</b> | <b>Number of Households</b> | <b>Number of residential units</b> | <b>Household/Unit</b> | <b>Person/Unit</b> |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>1976</b> | 4530              | 982                         | 665                                | 1.5                   | 6.8                |
| <b>1986</b> | 6027              | 1370                        | 1163                               | 1.18                  | 5.2                |

(Reference: Rafiei, 1989)

The decrease in the Household/Unit indicator from 1.5 to 1.18 reveals that while there was a 1.5 million increase in the population of Tehran within 10 years, there were more families who were able to reside in a proper dwelling. Also, this study shows a relative change in housing tenure in Post-Revolutionary Tehran:

**Table 4-9: Type of Housing tenure in 1976 and 1986**

| <b>Type of Housing tenure</b> | <b>1976</b>             |          | <b>1986</b>             |          |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|
|                               | Number<br>(1000 people) | Per cent | Number<br>(1000 people) | Per cent |
| <b>Ownership</b>              | 520.8                   | 53%      | 862.5                   | 62.9%    |
| <b>Tenancy</b>                | 362.7                   | 37%      | 337                     | 24.6%    |
| <b>Other</b>                  | 98.2                    | 10%      | 171                     | 12.5%    |
| <b>Total</b>                  | 981.7                   | 100%     | 1370.5                  | 100%     |

(Reference: Rafiei, 1989)

While there were only 53% of people who lived in their own home in 1976, there was an increase up to 62.9% in the ownership of units after the revolution. Other types of occupation, which accounted for 12.5% in 1986, included free housing, housing association, or cooperative housing which belonged to those who had a link to the state apparatus. It seems as if the idea of social justice, to some degree, had embodied on the ground. Later, I will argue that against its revolutionary claim this improvement, as it were, has class characteristics and was particularly beneficial to those who fit the criteria of revolutionary Muslim or those who were state employees. But, regarding poor groups, the revolution and its ideal of social justice were just an opening possibility in which they needed to employ new tactics to satisfy their basic needs such as housing.

Beside the class characteristics of the housing programme, one can identify another urban phenomenon pertaining to the housing problem. Thanks to the massive home construction in the first three years of the revolution, in turn a result of unstable revolutionary periods when the motto of “home for every single Iranian family across the country” had eclipsed the housing criteria and construction regulations, and due to the land distribution programme, Tehran underwent a process of “democratisation of home construction through dispossession” (Table 4-10). This process denotes the publicisation of home construction which prior to this period was confine to the hand of few, mainly land speculators and developers. From then on, middle class and petty owners learned how to transform their property to an exchange value circulating their capital within the process of construction.

As is clear from the table, we had a rapid period of home construction in the early period of the revolution.

**Table 4-10: Number of constructed residential dwellings between 1976 to 1986**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Number of constructed residential dwelling (1000)</b> |
|-------------|--|
| 1976-78     | 150  |
| 1978-80     | 160  |
| 1980-82     | 80   |
| 1982-84     | 60   |
| 1984-86     | 50   |
| 1986        | 30   |

(Reference: Refiei, 1989)

As the table shows, even before the revolution, from 1976 to 1978, one can witness a high rate of home construction. But, this should not be confused with the logic behind the mass construction in the first two years of the revolution. In the last period, home construction was followed by the policy of public housing funded by huge oil revenues. Furthermore, Mohammad Reza, the king of Iran at the time, made it compulsory for owners of large-scale industries to construct homes for their workers. Therefore, the main agencies in home construction before the revolution were the state and owners of big companies. However, after the revolution the direct intervention of the state and the role of the bourgeoisie were replaced with the logic of democratisation of home construction through dispossession. Instead of getting involved in construction, the revolutionary state set the ground for individuals to construct their own homes. This required the state to control the increasing value of land, which made up the



big share of the value of housing. Urban Land Law became the means to enhance the control of the land market by setting a ceiling on land ownership more than which was to be transferred into the hands of the state. In addition to Urban Land Law, there were more policies implemented to free land markets from speculative activities. Transferring lands to individuals, low-interest loans from the banking system, public procurement of low-price building materials, and reduction of house rents by up to 20% were among them. Alongside these public services, I should again emphasise the active role of revolutionary institutions, in particular the Housing Foundation and Jihad for Construction, in solving the housing issue.

In the constitution of the Housing Foundation, for instance, we can see that the principal duty of the Housing Foundation is defined as to meet the requirements of housing provision for the poor and the dispossessed (Article 1 and 2). “Satisfying the need for building materials through production, procurement, and distribution” (Article 5), also, was another responsibility of the Housing Foundation. A 10-year report of the Housing Foundation summarises its activities from 1979 to 1988 as seen below.

**Table 4-11: Housing Foundation activities between 1979-1988**

|               | <b>Built residential<br/>units</b> | <b>Under construction<br/>units</b> | <b>Loans<br/>(Million<br/>Toman)</b> | <b>Transferred<br/>land<br/>(1000m2)</b> |
|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Tehran</b> | 2408                               | 80                                  | 373                                  | ----                                     |
| <b>Total</b>  | 37588                              | 4244                                | 6200                                 | 30000                                    |

(Source: Athari, 1991)

Nevertheless, the primary focus of such revolutionary institutions was in rural areas since their aim was the realisation of the ideal of social justice in which the prime symbol was the widening gap between town and city.

In the aftermath of the intervention of the state in the land problem and as a consequence of the involvement of the revolutionary institution, the geographical map of Tehran changed dramatically. Against this background, in the first decade of the revolution, 432,000 land lots equivalent to 11,000 hectares were transferred to the people. Athari reports that in the same period the rate of construction of residential buildings went up by 4.7% annually, whereas the annual growth of population was merely 3.7% (2006). Also, according to his research, there was an improvement in the ratio of non-standard (shanties, shacks, etc.) to standard dwellings from 2.5 to 0.9 (Athari, 2006). Therefore, the expansion of Tehran exceeded its determined boundaries. In fact, in the first comprehensive plan of Tehran designed in 1968, in order to prevent any further growth of Tehran, there was a provision for growth limit beyond which any construction became forbidden. However, after the revolution, as a result of redistributive policy, this limit was transgressed. Furthermore, since much of the nationalised lands, in particular mavaat lands that were at the centre of urban land laws, were concentrated at the periphery of Tehran, within two years the area of the city doubled (Ehsani, 2009). Table 4-12 provides a comparison of the transformation of residential spaces in the first decade of the revolution.

**Table 4-12: Transformation of residential space in Tehran (1976-1986)**

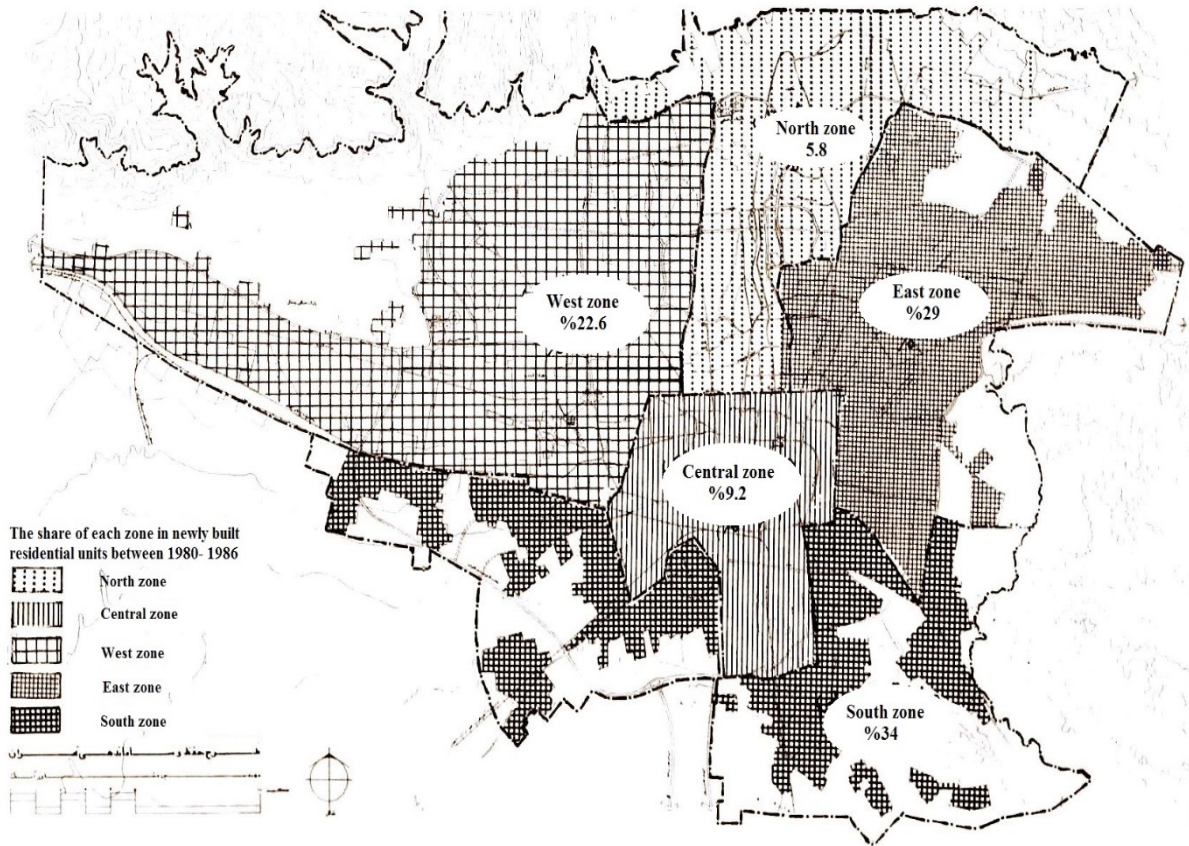
| <b>Year</b> | <b>Area of Tehran<br/>(Hectare)</b> | <b>The area of<br/>residential spaces<br/>(Hectare)</b> | <b>Residential space<br/>per capita (M2)</b> | <b>Residential land-<br/>use of Tehran (%)</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>1976</b> | 26000                               | 9800  | 21.6   | 37.7%  |
| <b>1986</b> | 54300                               | 16300   | 26.9   | 30%  |

(Reference: Rafiei, 1989)

The table indicates that the area of Tehran and its residential spaces became nearly 2 and 1.5 times bigger respectively within 10 years. Similarly, we can recognise a growth in residential space per capita from 21.6 m2 to 26.9 m2.

However, this improvement in housing indicators could be interpreted in another way. As mentioned previously, the expansion of Tehran occurred largely in formerly nationalised lands which were supposed to be public properties. More than 75% of new units and complexes built between 1979 and 1983, for instance, were concentrated in newly attached parts of Tehran (Ehsani, 2011) (Figure 4-1).

**Figure 4-1: Expansion of Tehran**



Interestingly, more than half of these transferred lots went into the hands of individuals (55%). Among the rest, 31% and 14% were transferred to cooperatives and professional construction companies respectively (Yazdani, 2003). Furthermore, the cluster of sporadic villages around Tehran was transformed into residential areas becoming sprawling suburbs of Tehran. As the state had left the field of housing construction, the vacuum was filled by the private sector, but not in the form of companies, rather as individuals. This process can be called democratisation of home construction since the act of constructing residential buildings is carried out by individual producers. In this process, the share of state investment was less than 2% (Ehsani,

2011). By the transformation of the state function from constructing residential buildings to site and service, it seemed as if the only winners from the housing market would be large-scale construction companies who act traditionally as supplementary to the state functions. Nevertheless, the populist tendency of leaders of the revolution, as a general trend, did not allow large-scale companies to flourish. The fate of these companies was either to be confiscated by the revolutionary state or that their owners and managers fled the country. So, in the absence of a strong private sector and by withdrawal of the state from home construction, the field was left for ordinary people.

To be more specific, one can always ask who are the ordinary people? People need to be classified into various groups. Likewise, those public lands that were sold below market price to individuals, and became privatised, did not get into the hands of the poor or the dispossessed. Rather, the main customers of these lands were among the growing middle-class and state employees. Those who could enter state bureaucracy and revolutionary establishments had a chance to climb up the ladder of social status. It is worth mentioning that public employment almost doubled in size, from 1.67 to 3.45 million people (Central Bank, 1991), within ten years after the revolution. With the stagnation in other markets, coupled with the increasing migration to big cities, the distributive policy of lands made the land market a profitable field to invest in. Following this the share of housing investment in relation to total capital formation increased dramatically (Table 4-13).

**Table 4-13-The share of housing investment (1976-1986)**

|  | <b>1976</b> | <b>1980</b> | <b>1986</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>The share of housing investment</b> | 24%         | 40%         | 36.5%       |

Hence is seen the commodification of land after the revolution. The banking system also intensified this trend by channelling capital to the housing market. “Subsidized banking credit intended for low-income housing did not benefit the poor, however, as the greatest beneficiaries turned out to be public-sector employees, state clients (veterans and families of war dead) and the middle classes who could maintain substantial bank deposits as collateral” (Ehsani, 2011). Ehsani has showed that, against the revolutionary gesture of supporting the dispossessed, a large part of state-distributed land plots and more than 90% of state-built houses, for example, went into the hands of state employees and clients (Ehsani, 2001). Moreover, this limitless transfer of urban lands accompanied with the individualisation of home construction impeded the plan of mass production of homes for low-income people. This stratum of the society was also deprived of housing subsidy, since it was merely allocated to housing cooperatives whose members were workers of large-scale companies. As a result, the majority of low-income people who did not benefit from any public services pertaining to the housing problem were accommodated at the edge of Tehran in shanties and shacks.

In this regard, a study conducted by the Housing Ministry in 1989 can be helpfully illustrative. The study has examined home conditions across all 20 districts of Tehran in two different periods before and after the revolution. Using both quantitative and qualitative factors, each district is assigned a grade from 1 to 4 in which 1 represents the best condition and 4 represents the worst one. The factors consisted of seven variables as follows:

1. The household / dwelling ratio

2. The person / dwelling ratio
3. The person / room ratio
4. The room / dwelling ratio
5. The household / room ratio
6. The dwellings with one household / total dwellings ratio
7. The quality of building materials

The result of the study reveals that in contrast to the revolutionary demand for diminishing class inequality Tehran had been more polarised since the revolution:

**Table 4-14: The conditions of Tehran's districts**

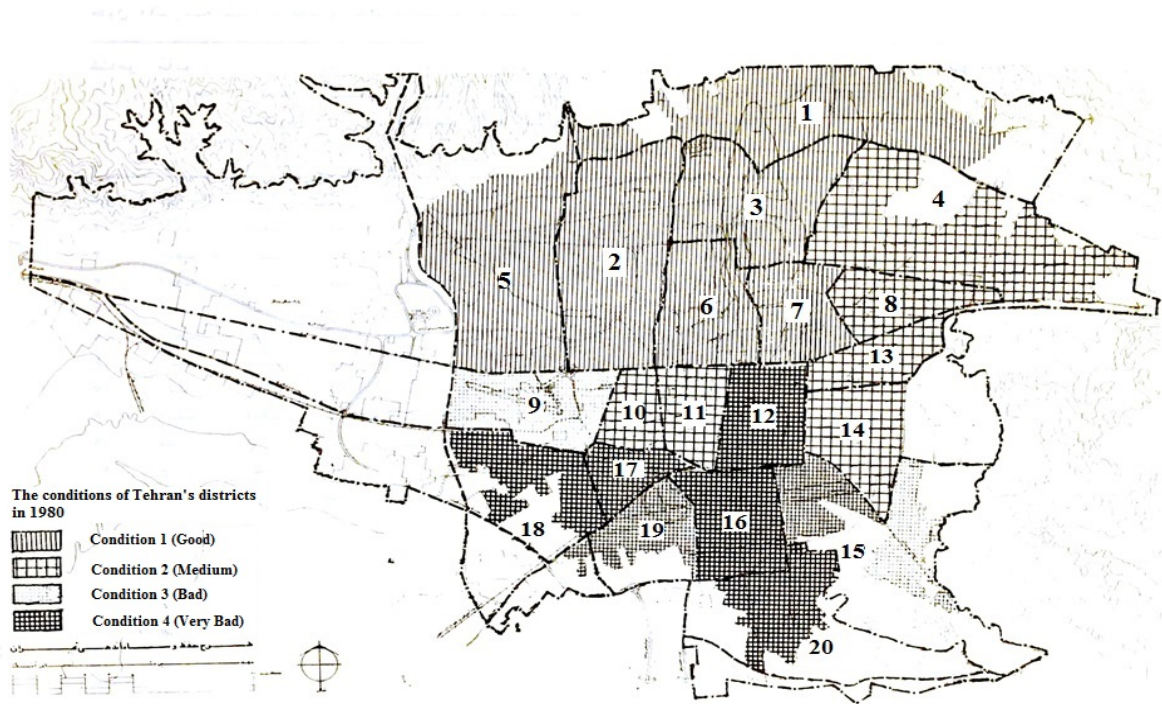
|                           |      | Condition               |                     |         |                      |
|---------------------------|------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------|
|                           |      | 1 (Good)                | 2 (Medium)          | 3 (Bad) | 4 (Very bad)         |
| Districts                 | 1980 | 1,2,3,5,6,7             | 4,8,10,11,13,1<br>4 | 9,15,19 | 12,16,17,18,20       |
|                           | 1986 | 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,13,1<br>4 | 4,11                | 9,10    | 12,15,16,17,18,19,20 |
| Total number of districts | 1980 | 6                       | 6                   | 3       | 5                    |
|                           | 1986 | 9                       | 2                   | 2       | 7                    |

(Reference: Rafiei, 1989)

As Table 4-14 reflects, the process of spatial differentiation intensified during the first decade of the revolution. The number of districts with low-quality dwellings rose from 5 to 7 within the six years of the survey period. Furthermore, the survey reflects the increase in the number

of districts with high-quality dwellings from 6 to 9. Figures 2 and 3 give clear visual presentations of this spatial differentiation of housing quality.

### Figure 4-2: Housing quality in 1980

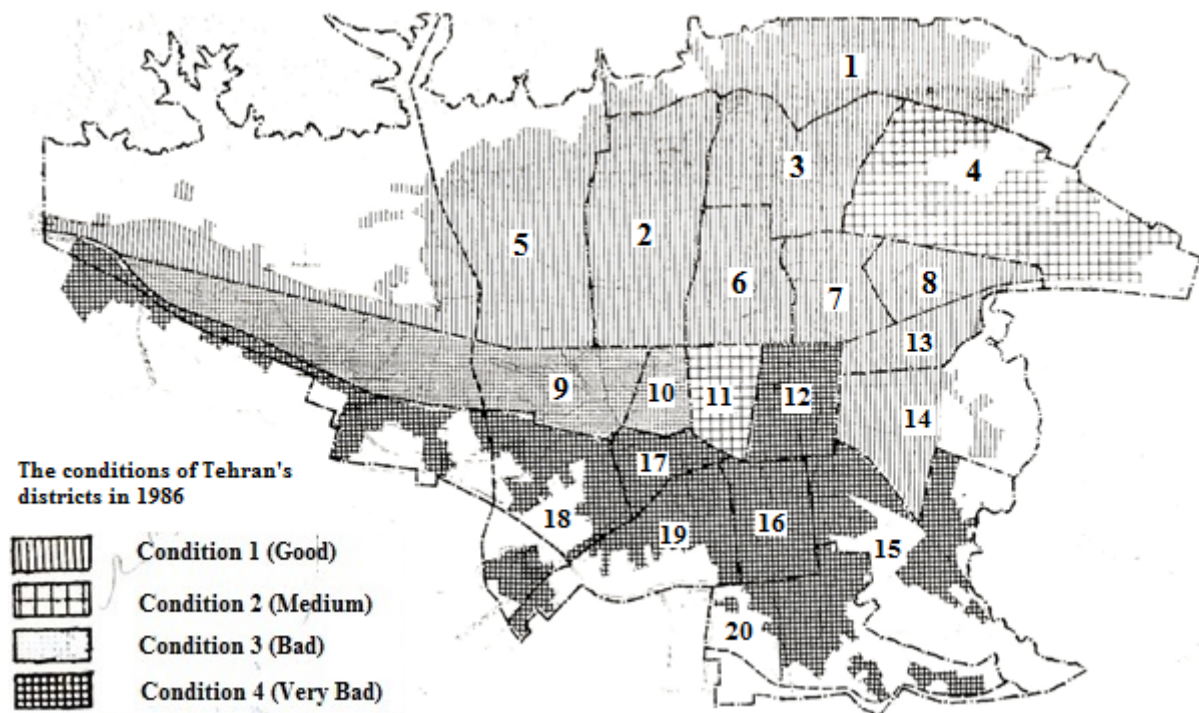


What is quite unexpected is that the pace of polarisation of Tehran was not slowed down, but, against the promise of social justice of the revolutionary state it was accelerated. Although it began in the mid-twentieth century, as a result of the authoritarian modernisation of the Pahlavi dynasty, the collective revolutionary plea for the reversion of this trend would have required a complete break from the past situation. The early confiscations of properties of Pahlavi's relatives and the distributive policy of lands must be read against this background. But, regardless of these redistributive policies, the North-South binary was reinforced.



Beside this quantitative analysis, I would like to draw our attention to the qualitative transformation which occurred in this period. It would be wrong if one considers the widening gap between north and south merely as a continuation of the trend that had begun in Pahlavi's period.

**Figure 4-3: Housing quality in 1986**



Alongside the continuity, we must draw on discontinuity as well. Following the Islamic Revolution, there was a transformation in the characteristics of the upper class. If north of Tehran was traditionally occupied by heads of the Army, owners of large-scale industries, high-rank managers, and the Shah's relatives, the Islamist nouveau riches replaced them after the

revolution. By accelerating the process of social mobility, the revolution produced its organic upper class. Later, I will talk about the traits of these nouveau riches in more detail, but, here to present a general picture, I should mention that they were either part of the government apparatus, or members of the Bazaar who were traditional allies of *Rohanis* (Islamic clergies). Therefore, in accompany with the emergence of the nouveau riches, the north of Tehran was differentiated spatially from the south of Tehran.

#### **4-2- The production of Islamic space**

“What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? What would remain of a religious ideology... if it were not based on places and their names...What we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein.”

**Henri Lefebvre (1991: 44)**

“Neither East, nor West, just Islamic Republic”

**A slogan of the 1979 revolution**

In 1979, the Islamic revolution overthrew Mohammad Reza the Shah, a pro-West monarch of Iran. Dissatisfied with the prevalence of Western order, both in terms of ideology and practices, Iranian revolutionaries rejected the status quo calling for a new order of things.

**Figure 4-4: Neither East, nor West, just Islamic Republic**



If the past regime was organised through authoritarian modernisation, in which the central signifier was development combined with the nostalgia of the ancient Persia Kingdom, the new situation demanded an alternative to reconfigure the relations of different parts in a novel whole. With the collapse of the Shah regime, it turned out that Islam would be the new central signifier around which various particularities would reconstruct a new whole. Then, figures of leftist guerilla combatants were substituted with the figure of Ayatollah Khomeini as the leader of the revolution. Demand for an Islamic regime penetrated revolutionary slogans such as “Independency, Freedom, Islamic Republic” and “Neither East, Nor West, just Islamic Republic”.

**Figure 4-5: Islamic flags**



To use Marx's language, Islam became the dominant determination marking the arrival of a new epoch. This is particularly important when one is to employ a Marxist analysis of a certain phenomenon. If in a capitalist society it is labour and capital that find their abstract universality and subordinate other categories to themselves (Marx, 1973), in Post-Revolution Iran this role was conferred on Islam. As a result, other domains, from economic to cultural and social, found their meanings and implications in relation to Islam. In fact, it is this very function of Islam that prevents us from exhausting the production of Tehran in mere economic categories. While using Lefebvre's terminology in analysing Tehran's transformation, it requires us to reconstruct his theory so that the role of Islam is addressed. It would be simply insufficient to only draw on the dynamic of a capitalist mechanism in order to give an explanation of the transformation of Tehran after the revolution since the principal aim of the revolution was to spread the Islamic ideology over urban life. So, along with class stratification that is grounded on economic measures, the revolution introduced another type of classification articulated by means of Islamic ideology.

In this regard, the last section, which was mostly concerned with economic processes, is supplemented with a section on Islamification. Here, in tune with Lefebvre, the concept of production is regarded in its broader Hegelian sense:

“First, the (absolute) Idea produces the world; next, nature produces the human being; and the human being in turn, by dint of struggle and labor, produces at once history, knowledge, and self-consciousness - and hence that Mind which reproduces the initial and ultimate Idea.”

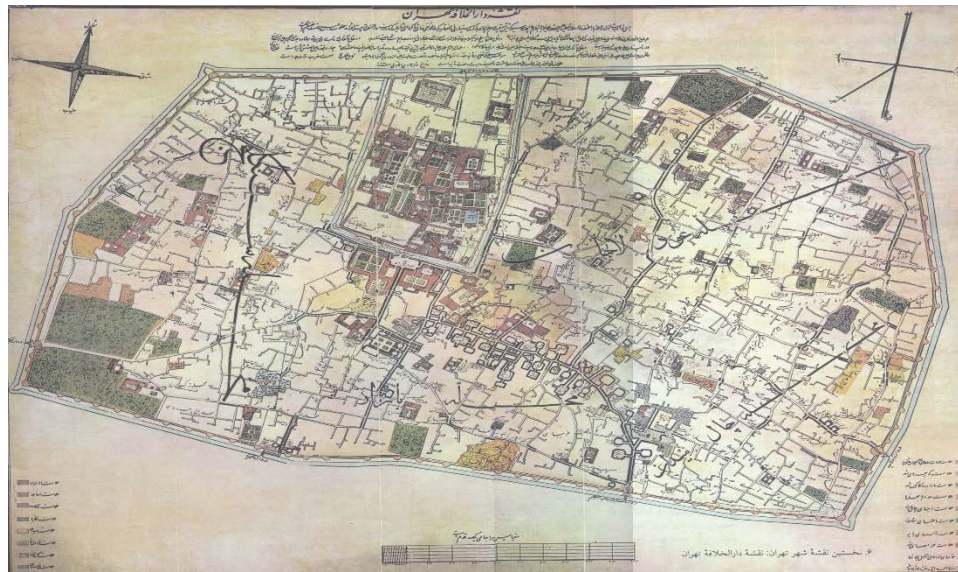
(Lefebvre, 1991: 68)

To show the implication of Islam in producing Post-Revolutionary Tehran I will first touch upon the gender politics, in particular the hijab and gender segregation, of the Islamic government and its spatial consequences since Islamification nowhere unfolds itself better than the area of women issues. This is partly due to the prevalence of feminist discourses before the revolution as an ideology against Islamic inequality in terms of women rights. Feminist efforts were symbolised as a modernisation plan of the king. Therefore, one of the immediate task of the revolution was to oppose this trend in order to Islamise its own space.

According to the Qur’anic interpretation of the legitimate government, it is the exclusive right of Allah to rule over the globe (cf. Qur’an, Chapter 57, Verses 2 and 5). The metaphysical dichotomy of divine and profane has made it necessary for the existence of mediation between two worlds. Hence, the right of sovereignty is conferred to Allah’s representatives on the earth, namely Mohammad, and by extension, Caliphs. Therefore, the main mission of a Caliph is to establish an Islamic sovereignty by setting in motion Islamic regulations and rules within his territory and keeping it under surveillance. So, Caliphs were guardians of Islam within their territory. This theocratic sovereign polity had a specific implication for the way in which the city is conceived in the Islamic tradition. The city is a territorial space within which boundaries

the Shah (the king) has a total right to rule over. In this context, the centre of a kingdom, where the Shah's political administration is concentrated, is called *Dar al-Caliphate* (the realm of Caliphate) (Figure 4-6).

**Figure 4-6: The map of Tehran created in 1854 titled Dar al-Caliphate of Tehran**



It is crucial to take into account this Islamic conception of the city particularly when one is to apply conceptual categories coming out of Western contexts on other geographies. Among these categories are the dichotomy of public and private space which can be traced back to ancient Greek city-states and their inherent binary of polis and oikos. Polis was a spatial condition for all citizens to congregate and make a collective decision, politics, for the future of the polis. It was the place of the constitution of “the common”. In contrast, oikos consisted of private houses of the polis and was the space of individual interests where the head of a household dealt with economic affairs. Now, a comparison between Polis and Dar al-Caliphate would unveil the analytical mistake of adapting categories with Western history to different historical spaces. Since the Orient has long been struggling to know itself through Eurocentric epistemology, the first duty of any scholars is to stress the limits of occidental terminology in representing the



East. In this respect, I believe that rather than applying the concepts of public and private space to the geography of Iran we should talk of *Arbab* (master) Space and *Ra'yaat* (bondsmen) Space. Historically, *Ra'yaat* were the ordinary people of Iranian kingdom who had to follow the Shah's orders. In the Shah's territory, *Ra'yaat* were deprived of their rights and their properties were subjected to the will of the Shah. The history of Iran is filled with the arbitrary confiscation and expropriation of *Ra'yaat*'s properties by kings (cf. Katouzian, 1997). The domination of the Shah over his *Ra'yaat* was to the degree that the political system of Iran is conceptualised as "Arbitrary State" (Katouzian, 1997) and its corresponding city is theorised as "The City of Force" (Piran, 1997). Against this background, the streets of Dar al-Caliphate, rather than being conceived as the public space of citizens to congregate and to make decisions, in other words, rather than being politicised, was the place of displaying the authority of the Shah. The more power the Shah gained, the more control he exerted across its territory. Contrary to Agora, the centre of political life, the main square of Dar al-Caliphate, was the place of displaying the coercive force of the Shah. So, occasionally, these squares turned into the centres of public punishment such as whipping or executing. The emergence of *Miadan Edam* (Execution Square) in the mid-19th century, as one of the principal squares of the time, must be read in this context.

This conception of Dar al-Caliphate was among those persistent elements that continued even after the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy. furthermore, the ideal of an Islamic city reinforced it. So, Ayatollah Khomeini became the Shi'a's version of Caliph and the streets of Tehran transformed into Dar al-Caliphate where the Islamic laws were to be implemented.

**Figure 4-7: Public execution in a city square**



Things found their Qur'anic connotations; the West, in particular America, was portrayed as the Great Satan, in contrast to the newly purified realm of the divine. Since then, the dominant discourse changed in the service of the ideal of Islam.



**Figure 4-8: Graffiti on a wall of a Tehran street portraying America as Big Satan**



People, regardless of their economic status, were divided into two groups based on their relation to Islam: revolutionary religious man and non-religious man. Bodies were transformed into the media carrying the burden of ideologies. Islamic appearance, on the one hand, was embodiment in a long beard and moustache, dark shirt with long sleeves to cover hands, and linen trousers for men and *Chador* (long black veil that covers almost all the body of a woman) for women. On the other hand, there were non-religious people with shaved beard, sleeveless shirt, especially colourful ones, wearing jeans. Also, a woman who did not have a proper veil or wear long clothing to cover her arms and feet was considered non-religious.

In this revolutionary period, while the promise of social justice was put on the agenda to lessen the gap between poor and rich, the process of gender differentiation was accelerated resulting in widening the male/female distinction. Men were redefined as a compatible sex to Arbab Space and, therefore, masculinity became a marker of Arbab Space, whereas women were

reconstructed as an element of home. It was believed, and often practiced, that women must be devoted to raise children and take care of home affairs, whereas men were to work outside, in Arbab Space. In the same light, the Islamic Republic Constitution did not “recognize women as individuals but rather as ‘family’ and women as mothers and wives” (Nayyeri, 2013:3). It is accentuated in Article 21 of the Constitution that:

“The government must ensure the rights of women in all respects, in conformity with Islamic criteria, and accomplish the following goals;

- 1) Create a favorable environment for the development of a woman's personality and the restoration of her rights, both the material and intellectual;
- 2) The protection of mothers, particularly during pregnancy and child-rearing, and the protection of children without guardians;
- 3) Establishing competent courts to protect and preserve the family;
- 4) The provision of special insurance for widows, senior women, and women without support;
- 5) Granting the guardianship of children to worthy mothers, in order to protect the interests of the children, in the absence of a legal guardian.”

The Nullification of Family Protection Law of 1967, also, must be seen against this context. Formerly, Family Protection Law had given women the conditional right to ask for divorce. Conceived as contradictory to the Islamic edict, Sharia, in which the right to get a divorce is exclusively given to men, the Law was annulled in 1979 by Khomeini’s office. Moreover, polygamy was as announced legal by the Islamic government (Milani, 1994: 201).

Despite the introduction of Islamic elements into Iranian space after the revolution, which was a break from the former order, we can recognise some elements of continuity in the post-revolutionary era. The presence of women in public places was one of these persistent elements. The increasing interrelations between the West and Iran in the opening years of the 20th century,

accompanied with the subsequent policy of authoritarian modernisation by the Pahlavi dynasty, had led to the noticeable presence of women in public places and the heterosocial relations appeared in Arbab Space (Najmabadi, 2005). Yet, the reaction of the 1979 revolution to this public presence and heterosociality seemed contradictory. On the one hand, they were taken as signs of Western culture penetrating Iranian society and, consequently, were condemned. On the other hand, the revolution was not a backward movement demanding a return to the era of Mohammad. Quite contrary, it was influenced by the modern utopia of women's equality and productivity. The combination of these two seemingly contradictory tendencies gave birth to the hijab problem.

#### **4-2-1- Hijab**

On 7th March 1979, less than one month after the revolution, and one day before Women's Day, a quote from Khomeini in the *Keyhan* newspaper created a scene:

“In Islamic Ministries no one is allowed to commit a sin. In Islamic Ministries women must not work in the nude [without hijab]. They can work, but with hijab. There is no constraint on women's work [in public sector], but it must be in accord with Islamic hijab” (Keyhan, 7th March 1979).

This turned the Women's Day demonstration into a protest against the compulsory hijab. Demonstrators claimed that Khomeini's quote was against women's freedom. But, the hijab did not officially become compulsory until August 1980 when Khomeini gave the state a 10-day ultimatum to purge offices from any signs of the former regime and to make them Islamic. Since then, women were forced to have a hijab if they were to enter public offices.

It would not be wrong if one claims that the hijab formed the bedrock of the 1979 revolution. But, that how and why the hijab attained this position makes us to refer back to the essence of Arbab Space in the revolutionary period. As I have mentioned earlier, the reaction of the revolution to the Shah's modernisation from above was a combination of rejecting and preserving. It actually followed the logic of Lefebvrian dialectic.

Keeping with Lefebvrian dialectic, along with modernisation and Islamification we must add the omnipresent third term of Arbab Space affecting and being affected by the two former terms. So, the negation of Western culture by means of Islamification after the revolution not only de-westernised the space of Iran but also Islamified the Western culture through the hijab. By rejecting certain elements of Western culture such as hijabless women, therefore, the Arbab Space welcomed the public presence of women which, in turn, was an element of modernisation. The result was the transformation of all three terms, namely modernisation, Islamification, and Arbab Space after the revolution. The critical point here is the mechanism through which Arbab Space was reconfigured to integrate women within its boundaries after the revolution. Prior to Reza Shah's policy of modernisation from above, women had culturally been confined to their homes (Ra'yaat space). Spatially, homes were partitioned into two sections; *Andaruni* and *Biruni* (Interior and Exterior)<sup>1</sup> (Figure 7).<sup>9</sup>

This gendered division, however, was marked as a symbol of the backwardness of Iranian life during the modernisation period. Fascinated by the development of European countries, cultural elites of the time praised the heterosociality of their public spaces and took it as the essence of progress (Najmabadi, 2005). Hence there arose the growth of mixed schools and universities

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<sup>1</sup> The interior (*andaruni*) was a private space allocated to women where no strangers were entitled to enter. But the exterior (*biruni*), which included the public spaces of the house such as the courtyard and drawing room, was the masculine part where women's entry required observation of Islamic dress and moral codes (Amirebrahimi, 2006).

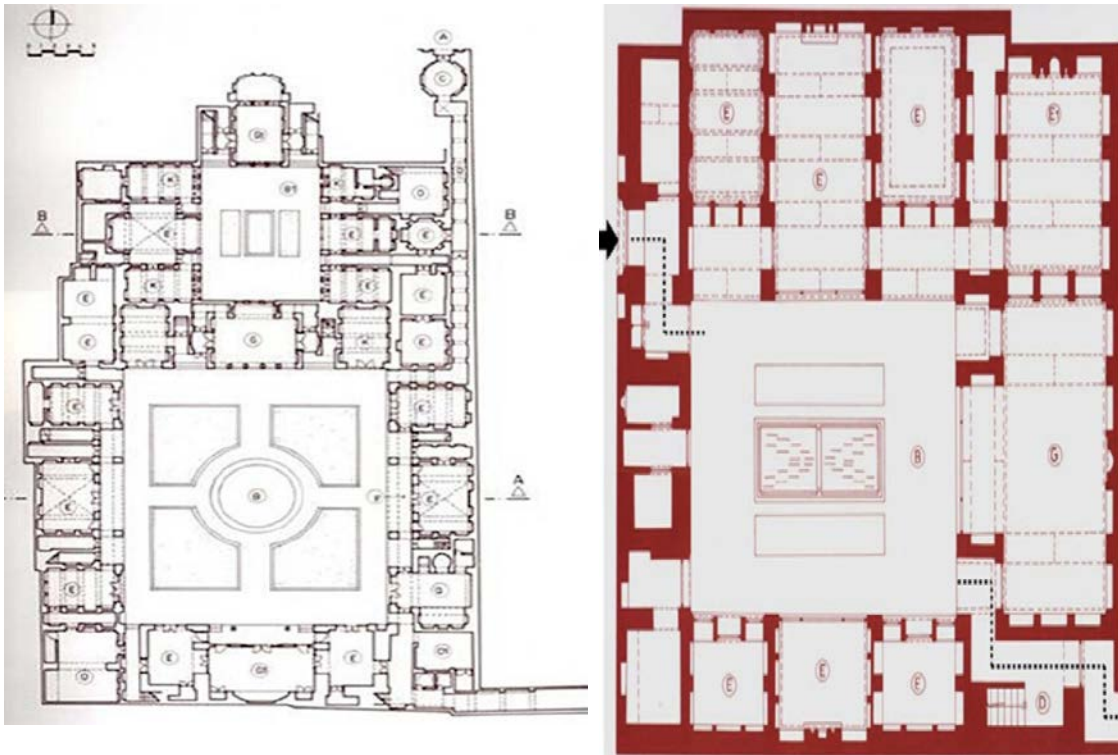
and the increasing employment of women in the state bureaucracy. Nor did it occur without public resistance of the traditional stratum of the society<sup>2</sup>, but the public presence of women became noticeable now more than ever before. In other words, the authoritarian modernisation of the Shah acted as a mediation through which a level of femininity was injected to Arbab Space. Alongside this, the Islamic elements of architecture were eclipsed by newly built residential complexes which were designed based on modern principles.

The 1979 revolution, however, was a reaction to this materialisation of Western values within Iranian cities. Rejecting the Shah's modernisation through Islamic ideals, the third term, namely hijab, came across as completing the triad dialectic of modernity-Islamification-hijab. In fact, the hijab mediated between modernisation and Islamification leading to a reconciliation between them. Since then, Arbab Space not only preserved an element of modernisation, that is the public presence of women, but also showed an element of Islamic space, that is the hijab. By hiding the bodies of women, the aim was to cover feminine traits of women from men's gaze in public spaces. "It means that the woman is present in the men's world, but invisible; she has no right to be in the street" (Mernissi, 1987: 143). Seen from the spatial point of view, the hijab was actually a fluid andaruni giving permission to women to move freely across the city. If women were to be controlled by the head of the household in the fixed loci of houses in the old system, now surveillance was dislocated spreading all over the city.

**Figure 4-9: An aristocratic family's housing**

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<sup>2</sup> C.F. Khomeini's objection to women's presence in parliament, public association, and city hall in 1962 (Montazeri, Khaterat: 350)



An aristocratic family's housing complexes including *andaruni* (spaces around small courtyard) for family's private and *biruni* (spaces around large courtyard) for men's reception

“The prevalence of new ways of life and the generalisation of urban culture alongside the rule of the Islamic morality caused the enclosed and controlled spaces such as the interiors (homes) to lose their particular local concept and gain the ability to move through space and time without any obligation to have a particular local position or physical border” (Amirebrahimi, 2004). Against this context, Amirebrahimi suggested that the black colour of the women’s hijab representing the transportable walls of *andaruni* made women invisible by repressing any signs of difference and diversity among them (Amirebrahimi, 2004). I would like to add that the hijab functioned as externalisation of the interior. In accordance with the transformation of the space

of subjectification, the source of surveillance changed too. The head of the household, father, was replaced by the revolutionary state. Streets and squares became the loci of power exertion over women protecting Islamic principles of Arbab Space and not to be transgressed by rebel bodies. This reminds us of Foucault's words:

“While, on the one hand, the disciplinary establishments increase, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become 'de-institutionalized', to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and to circulate in a 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted” (1977: 211).

#### **4-2-2- Revolutionary streets**

The post-revolutionary streets of Tehran reminisces Lefebvre's words that “what would remain of a religious ideology... if it were not based on places and their names” (Lefebvre, 1991:44). The utopia of an Islamic city could not persist without producing its own images and memories. To do so, the streets of Tehran, as a physical part of the space, were required to undergo an incessant process of revolutionisation. The 1979 revolution needed to actualise itself through built environment. But, following the logic of dialectic, these revolutionised streets preserved at once their Islamic and modern characteristics. To grasp this seemingly contradictory feature of post-revolutionary Tehran, I would like to introduce a dualistic process of “externalisation of the interior and internalisation of the exterior”. This concept refers to dislocation of social functions after the revolution. On the one hand, what traditionally used to be kept in homes, namely femininity, went free in Arbab space. Enhanced by the mediatory role of hijab, the streets of Tehran were imbued with womanhood. On the other hand, a variety of social activities, in particular those related to festivities and pleasure, which had been formerly

prevailed in Tehran, were wiped off the city and confined to Ra'yaat space. I have already shown the mechanism under which women participated in public activities and, therefore, provide Arbab space with femininity. Now I wish to present the reverse process in which Arbab space was stripped of its certain social functions, in particular those associated with entertainment and fête.

The fate of Castle of *Shahr-e Nou*, a place at the margin of Tehran allocated to sex workers, would be illustrative in this respect. Prior to the 1979 revolution, prostitutes were officially placed in the castle and being under supervision by the state and according to a report between 1956 to 1966 around 6 thousands women were given a health license (zand moghaddam, 2013). On 30<sup>th</sup> January, 12 days before the triumph of the revolution, Ettela'at newspaper reported:

“People gradually gathered around the Castle of ‘*Shahr-e Nou*’ in the evening around 5 o'clock... by 6 a couple of youngsters attacked the gate of Castle and then crowd followed them into the alleys of the Castle... homes and shops of the Castle were set into fire ... subsequently, a number of prostitutes were injured and 2 to 3 of them were murdered ... the ‘Neighbourhood of Sorrow’<sup>2</sup> was burning for a couple of hours and turning into a pile of ashes. Firefighters had announced that they wont tackle the fire since it is against the will of the people.” (Ettela'at, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1979)

The castle, which had now become a symbol of the former regime, was doomed to destruction. The castle had become a particularity that represented the totality of the old order. The new revolutionary consciousness, therefore, had forbidden sexual practices within the city. They must have been wipe off the Arbab space. For, a new set of relations seemed necessary to be

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Neighbourhood of Sorrow’ was a name that was given to the Castle of prostitutions in Tehran.



imposed upon Arbab space. By destroying the castle prostitution became practically illegal and sex workers dispersed across Tehran. In 12<sup>th</sup> July, Keyhan newspaper reports that 3 of the most famous prostitutes of the castle were executed by the court of the revolution (Keyhan, 1979, 12<sup>th</sup> July). But, there is no record on the fate of the other workers of the Neighbourhood of Sorrow. The dislocation of the prostitution resulted in the dispersion of sexual pleasure and domestication of it. Being internalised, sexual desire was confined into the private homes.

Destroying the loci of sexual desire, revolutionaries, however, did not stop at this point. The ideal of Islamic city sought to materialise itself on the surface of Tehran. To this end, other symbols of western culture must have been disappeared from the public scene. So, “alcohol was banned, as were bars and discos. Only traditional music was aired on state-controlled television and radio. Western films and music were outlawed” (Tazmini, 2012:211). Angry revolutionaries, furthermore, shut down two breweries, one in the west one in the east of Tehran. Moreover, instead of bars and discos, there was a high rate of mosque construction as a new Islamic place for social gathering.

Similar to the story of prostitution, alcohol, dance, music and other things that were previously taken as a foundation for sociality in Arbab space found their way to private homes and flats. Ra’yaat space actually accommodated those functions that had been discarded from public places by the newly dominated ideology. Since then, having party in private flats and playing western musical instruments in private homes became a common practice for certain strata of Iranian. Therefore, if externalisation of the interior was one part of the 1979 revolution, as we have seen in the case of women and hijab, internalisation of the exterior would have been the supplementary part of this Islamic space. It is through this double process that post-revolutionary space of Tehran mediates between Islamification and modernization. It seems to

me that any explanations that overlook either side of these binary or prioritise one over the other would be unsatisfactory.

In addition to this externalisation and internalisation we must stress the acceleratory role of the war in strengthening the revolutionisation of space. The breakout of Iran-Iraq war in 1980 enhanced the revolutionary streets to act as a medium to produce revolutionised Islamic discourse. Hence was the prevalence of graffiti of leaders of the revolution and inscription of revolutionary slogan on the walls of Tehran.

**Figure: 4-10: Islamic graffiti**



Moreover, Tehran experienced a massive current of changes pertaining to the names of streets. Two largest streets of Tehran, namely *Shah Reza* and *Pahlavi*, which connect east to west and north to south respectively, for instance, were changed to *Enghelab* (Revolution) and *Vali Asr*

(the name of the Shia's 12<sup>th</sup> Imam). Furthermore, naming allays and avenues after the name of Shahids<sup>2</sup>, martyrs, of Iran-Iraq<sup>2</sup> war became a common practice. It signifies the dogged determination of the newly established ruling class to remove any non-revolutionary signs and replaced them by the symbols of martyrs, of the Iran-Iraq war. So, Shahid had become a tool in the hands of the government to revolutionised space. In each neighbourhoods and districts of Tehran one could find the name of Shahids inscribed on the walls as if the whole potential of the revolution was concentrated in the name of Shahids. Furthermore, shahid represented another meaning too. Since the Iran-Iraq war was translated into the war of Iran against West, martyrhood conveyed a sense that in order to defend the promise of the revolution people are even ready to lose their lives. In this context, nothing would have been more revolutionary than shahid.

By Inscribing Shihids' names on the walls of Tehran, it was actually surveillance mechanism that had been dispersed across the city. To reinforce this fluid surveillance a policy of gender segregation was imposed. In his speech, Ayatollah Khomeini emphasised on the necessity of prevention of male-female interactions in public spaces (Haji Tehrani, 2010). Generally, gender segregation had long been rooted in Iranian culture, as was exemplified in the case of andaruni/biruni. But, the Islamic revolution placed it within a new set of relations. Following the ideal of Islamic space blended with modern values, gender segregation was implemented to keep women away from men's reach in Arbab space. Then, a series of regulations came about; hijab became mandatory, mixed schools were suspended, public offices and public transportation were genderly segregated. Moreover, if a man walked with a woman in a street

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<sup>2</sup> - *Shahid* is a Qur'anic term refers to<sup>2</sup>those followers of Mohammad who lost their lives in wars in order to establish an Islamic sovereignty. Because of this, shohada (Plural form of shahid) are highly respected in Muslim countries.

that would have been taken as a counter-revolutionary act unless they were relatives. The imposition of these regulations was a force to strengthen the authority of the newly established revolutionary state. The message was that the presence of women in public is supplemented with the existence of the omnipresent leviathan as the guardian of Arbab space. In fact, gender segregation had a political resonance proving that the revolution was still a rejection of the West even if there are elements of western urbanity behind it. The same line of policy was carried on through the first decade of the revolution. In March 1979, Khomeini decreed that beaches and sport centres are included into the rule of gender segregation. Two months later, as a result of the so-called office revolution, women were obliged to wear hijab in all public offices. Later on, Bani-Sadr, the president of Islamic Republic at the time, called this office revolution a war against western consumerist culture (Haji Tehrani, 2010). In 1982, schools were subjected to the same line of policy of gender segregation.

Since there are always fissures in space that give people opportunity to break the imposed Islamic morel guidelines, revolutionaries “created a variety of group to supervise the activities of the Iranians. The office for propagation of virtues and prevention of sins was formed to supervise Islamic morality and behaviour. Young zealots, organised in small groups, such as *Gasht e sarallah*, patrolled the streets and arrested those who did not abide by the Islamic dress code and who transgressed Islamic morality” (Milani, 1994, 212). In practice, these codes forbade any types of putting make-up such as hair colouring, nail polishing, lipstick, and so on in Arbab space (Gheytanchi, 2000). In this period, as Bayat states, “nothing was more jarring than the sudden disappearance of bright colours from public spaces; black and grey, as embodied in women’s *chadors* and men’s facial hair, now dominated the city’s visual landscape” (Bayat, 2010).

Post-revolutionary Islamification culminated in Cultural Revolution in 1980. Stimulated by the demand for Islamic university, the goal of the Cultural Revolution was to purge universities of un-Islamic staff. In so doing there was a three-day ultimatum given to all groups, mainly political ones, to shut down their offices and leave the universities (Jomhuri-e Islami, 1980, 19<sup>th</sup> April). The growing power of leftist discourse, as Moaddel claims, was another impetus behind Cultural Revolution united conservative *ulama* and liberals (Moaddel, 1993:212-3). However, Cultural Revolution, ultimately, went beyond the control of liberals and subjected them into its criteria. As the result, universities were kept closes for three years and course syllabuses were rewritten. Thousands of students and staff being accused of having leftist sympathy or un-Islamic behaviour got were expelled. Aksariyaat newspaper reports that only in Tehran University the number of academic staff fell down by %15 since the 1979 revolution. Moreover, Islamic ideology now makes up around %15 of the total credit of a bachelor degree (Aksariyaat, 1984, no 33 P.6). Cultural Revolution evidently showed insatiable appetite of the Islamic government to wipe non-Islamic elements off Arbab space.

By and large, this process of Islamification widened the gap between Arbab space and Ra'yaat in the first decade of the revolution. If north-south dichotomy indicated that the urban was articulated economically before the revolution, the growing Arbab-Ra'yaat binary after the revolution denotes an ideological axis through which the urban is partitioned. Through this ideological axis, "the large public spaces and squares were virtually take over by pro-regime vigilantes, who turned them into the enclosed or interior space of their ideological self, at the expense of those whose modes of life and tastes did not conform. As a consequence, private spaceand homes became for many the key loci of communication, sociability and recreation" (Bayat, 2010).

### **4-3- The space of resistance**

“The history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggle”

Marx, Communist Manifesto

#### **4-3-1- Marginalised groups**

On the eve of the Islamic revolution, while revolutionaries were occupying strategic centres of Tehran, there was another revolution at work in the back streets of the city carried out by the poor and disenfranchised. Although the latter had joined the current of the revolution fighting against the monarch, soon, after the establishment of the new order, the alliance fell apart. While the newly established power was busy producing its own Islamic city through siphoning off financial resources into its hands, the poor were extending their hold over vacant homes and developing informal dwellings. Soon after, the revolution revealed its class effect by attacking the marginalised, destroying their informally constructed shanties and forcing them to evacuate the illegally occupied houses.

Historically, the poor has always been a part of Iranian society. However, the emergence of the new modern poor was firmly bound up with authoritarian modernisation run by the Pahlavi monarchs. This modernisation not only led to massive urban migration and the creation of new industrial workers, but also attributed a spatial characterisation to the arrangement of social classes within Tehran. Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Tehran has undergone a sharp process of spatial segregation as is manifested in the south-north binary. On the one hand, there were well-off segments of society who had left their settlements in the then industrialised and polluted southern districts in order to benefit from unspoilt nature and enjoy living in the ever-increasing value of northern lands. On the other hand, there were the deprived strata of society who were

forced to settle in the south fields, including a range of slums and squatter settlements. Bayat estimates that by the mid-1970s Tehran had some fifty slums and squatter communities encompassing caves, tents, hovels, shacks, shanties, and urban villages that lacked very basic urban amenities (Bayat, 1997: 26). In another calculation, “by 1980 at least one million poor lived in the slums of Tehran and an estimated 400,000 resided in the squatter communities” (Bayat, 1997: 29).

This socially and spatially peripheralised segment of society, however, skilfully employed possibilities that the urban set before them to cope with their subsistence needs. Being excluded from urban development projects at the time, the poor applied a series of street politics, ‘the quiet encroachment of the ordinary’ to use Bayat’s term; “a silent, patient, protracted, and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive hardships and better their lives” (Bayat, 1997: 7). It is marked by atomised and prolonged mobilisation that in most cases lacks of ideology, structure, and leadership. The urban disenfranchised who are utterly overlooked by a dominant discourse, that takes the political campaign as the only legitimate form of resistance, make up the active agency for this movement. This includes “a variety of largely floating social clusters - migrants, refugees, the unemployed, squatters, street vendors, and other marginalized groups” (Bayat, 1997: 8-9). These groups, according to Bayat, were the last ones who joined the current of the Islamic revolution. Even after that, rather than empathising with the promises and ideals of Islamic society, they looked for ways to satisfy their very basic needs such as housing and livelihood. So, the quiet encroachment of the ordinary was mobilised by a sense of necessity. Deprived of any institutional grounds for satisfying their needs, the disenfranchised sought to pursue their aims individually. To do so, they were highly dependent on possibilities intrinsic to the urban

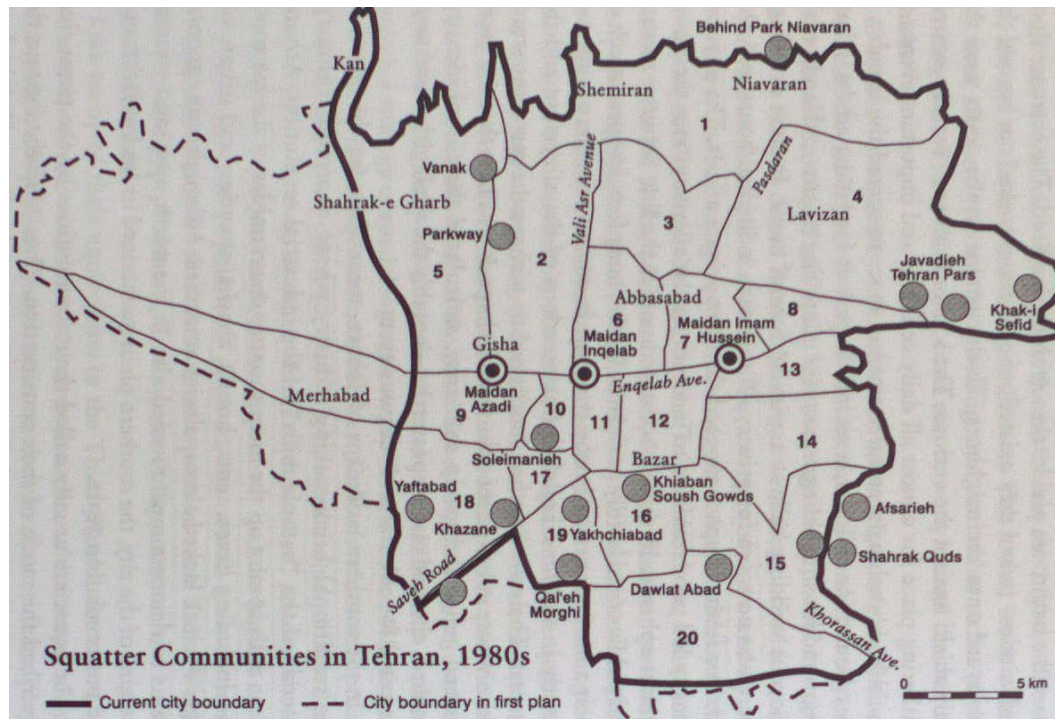
to enhance them in gaining access to the basic requirements of an urban life.

One can bring a broad range of actions under the title of street politics. However, here I wish to briefly touch upon only three forms of street politics carried out by urban squatters, street vendors, and homes and hotel occupants.

#### 4-3-2- Urban squatters

Squatters largely consisted of two groups. The first group included rural migrants who had left their local villages in search of a better livelihood and the second contained poor Tehranis who had not been able to get by with the difficulties of urban life, particularly housing expenditure. Together, they applied varied actions to supply and maintain a shelter for living within and around Tehran.

Figure 4-11- Squatters of Tehran in 1980s





(Source: Bayat, 1997)

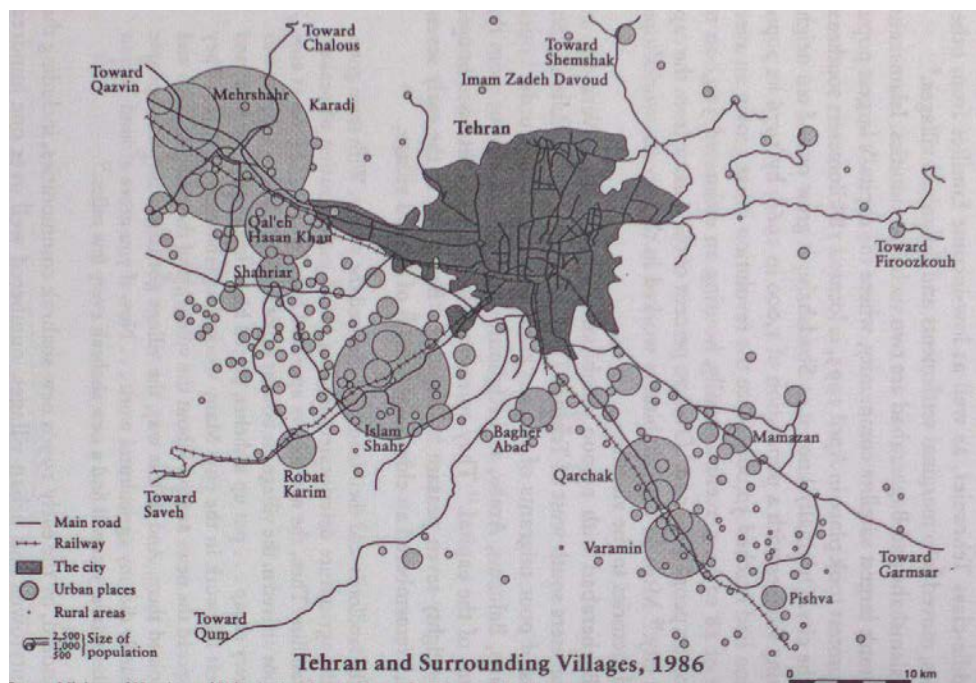
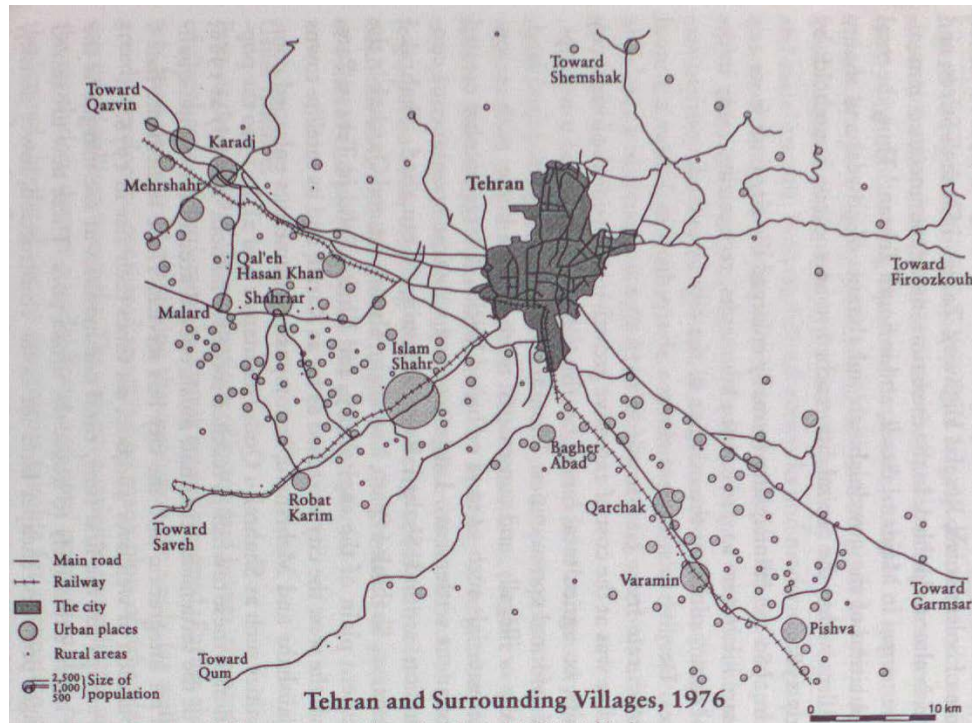
To do so, they began with squatting quietly in lands outside Tehran, away from the watchful eyes of the police, putting up shelters and setting up communities without much regard to regulations or legality. Having done this, they then strived to provide their settlements with urban supplies such as pipeline water, electricity, paved roads, and health and educational centres. To this end, squatters engaged in a varied range of activities from negotiation with government bureaucrats to illegally stealing electricity from utility poles. Among the squatters, some communities got together digging deep wells in order to solve the issue of water shortage. Finding this impractical, others looked for alternative ways. They eventually decided to buy a water tank. In terms of power supply, squatters began to connect their homes to the electricity poles. However, these unlawful practices did not remain unresponded to by the central powers. In a severe fight between squatters and police, in 1985, a number of the settlers were arrested and some others injured. Furthermore, in some cases the state imposed fines against transgressors (Bayat, 1997: 86). Nevertheless, the number of informal settlements grew up during the first decade of the revolution. By 1980, the total population of these settlements in Tehran reached some 100,000 households (Ibid: 77). Facing this extensive illegal land occupation and unpaid consumption of urban supplies, the intelligence service had to integrate occupants to ensure both state control and compensation for the use of collective services. In other words, by formalising squatted lands, the state aimed at extending its control over these lands. Moreover, by issuing payments, it was hoped that this could be regarded as a new source of state revenue. So, one can argue that the squatters' tactics implied two conflicting practices of informalisation and formalisation. First they occupied ownerless plots illegally and provided them with basic urban amenities and then negotiated with the state to give their settlements

legitimacy. Figure 9 clearly shows that the result of squatters' efforts was nothing less than the mushrooming growth of informal/formal settlements after the 1979 revolution.

#### **4-3-3- Homes and hotels occupants**

Not very long after the downfall of the old regime, a significant number of the upper class, particularly owners of industries, had either fled the country or been arrested by the revolutionary forces. This resulted in some 150,000 housing units - palaces, hotels, villas, and unfinished flats remaining ownerless (Bayat, 1997: 60). Along with the pro-poor rhetoric of the Islamic government, many hundreds of the dispossessed, carrying their entire belongings flooded into the houses and hotels. Such actions were mostly mobilised and provoked by students and young revolutionaries with leftist tendencies. A group of tent-settlers at the southern margin of Tehran, for instance, took over an apartment block in Doulatabad in Southeast of Tehran. Following this, thousands of homeless families, poor tenants, and university graduates joined the protagonists in Tehran and other urban centres, occupying empty apartment blocks, luxury homes, villas, and deserted hotels (Bayat, 1997: 61). In a similar incident, in December 1979 some thirty families from the poor neighbourhoods of the southern districts of Tehran took over half-finished apartments near Islamabad. The Ayandegan newspaper, also, reported that some 400 households occupied 308 homes in the same area (Ayandegan, 1979).

Figure 4-12: Tehran and surrounding villages in 1976 and 1986



Young activists played a crucial role in organising the homeless. They looked for vacant properties, and then mobilised the homeless and brought them to the target buildings. The process of occupation was not limited to the homes and apartments. It also included luxury hotels. During October 1979, over 1,000 students occupied the International Hotel and the Royal Garden Hotel. At the same time, left-wing students took over the Hotel Imperial, Hotel Sina, and some other hotels.

In most cases, the occupation was followed by the appointment of a committee to take care of the internal order within the building and defend their achievement against the external threats (Bayat, 1997: 63). However, their actions were not left out of the state's surveillance. Soon after, the Revolutionary Guard opposed occupants on the ground that they were acting as the agents of a communist counter-revolution. So, for a couple of months, and for years in some cases, there was a tension between occupants and the central powers. Also, government reactions against rebels varied from issuing worded warnings, using religious verdicts against occupation, to cutting water and electricity supplies, arrests and armed raids.

#### **4-3-4- Street vendors**

Along with home occupants and urban squatters, there were street vendors who challenged the totalitarian power of the state over Arbab space. Street vendors were largely composed of three groups namely war refugees, rural migrants, and the unemployed. Historically, street vendors were a constant element of modern Iranian cities. Shahri, for instance, points out that peddling was one of the persistent characteristics of Tehran after its modernisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

(Shahri, 1986). However, the massive outflow of oil revenue in the 1970s and its subsequent urbanisation in company with Land Reform intensified the number and differentiated the types of street vendors. Following his research in the 1970s, Bahrambeygui estimated that in Tehran alone there were more than 15,000 street vendors by the mid-1970s (Bahrambeygui, 84). The 1979 revolution, however, dramatically changed the quantity and quality of this stratum. Among everything, the most significant phenomenon was the emergence of political vendors. Gathering around big squares and across strategic streets, adherents of various political parties publicised their ideals and discussed their ideas. School and university students were the main participants of this type of street vendors. By the very early days of the establishment of the new regime, they began to

“set up stalls and kiosks along the sidewalks of the main streets of the capital city. They filled the pavements with their merchandise, mostly in the better-off central districts ...and those surrounding the major public parks. Some simply spread their handful of goods on a piece of newspaper on the ground. Others preferred to stand by a single table, trading their major items - books, newspapers, music cassettes, and tapes of political speeches.” (Bayat, 1997: 137)

In so doing, the supporters of different political thoughts occupied Arbab space turning it into their own space against state will. Soon after, however, this transgression went beyond the tolerance of the state and was fiercely suppressed in the aftermath of the confrontation on 20th June 1981.

Unlike political vendors, economic vendors set up their stalls and tables in the crowded streets turning them into a medium for securing their livelihood. According to a study, around 85% of these economic vendors were originally from places other than Tehran and only 15% were Tehranis (Enghelab-e Islami Newspaper, 1980). Among them, the majority were peasants or

were born in peasant families who, after the deepening of the effects of land policies, had to leave their villages and towns hoping to find a better job. Bayat touches upon three factors as the key reasons for the rapid growth of street vendors after the revolution: unemployment, a possibility of earning higher income, and autonomy from state regulations and institutions (Bayat, 1997: 141). Whatever the reason was economic vendors took the street as public property in which they could extract their share of interest. In accordance with this attitude, they set up their tables and stalls on the sidewalks and gradually extended their spatial domain by putting chairs, benches, tables, and plants around their spots and covering their areas with shades or umbrellas. These kiosks and stalls were usually connected to the city's electricity supply illegally (Ibid: 144) as if Tehran streets were transformed into "a boundless macrocosm of its great old bazaar with its densely packed little shops and narrow alleyways seemingly filled with everyone and everything" (Ibid: 139). This ensemble of street vendors, customers, objects, and activities had threatened the authority of the state over Arbab space. So, the following confrontation seemed inevitable. In addition to municipality forces and pasdars (semi-military forces of the revolution), the Anti-Vice Court played an active role in the demolition of street vendors in the name of beautifying Arbab space. Then, several institutions such as The Committee for Guild Affairs and The Committee Against Obstruction of Thoroughfares came into being to materialise the will of power. On May 25, 1981, the Kar Newspaper reported that a group of fifty pasdars attacked street vendors in Tehran damaging around 30 kiosks and stalls and injuring seven vendors (Kar Newspaper, 1981). By 1984, according to official reports, more than 90% of 120,000 street vendors had been removed from the streets of Tehran (Bayat, 1979: 148).

In the past few pages I have attempted to show how street vendors along with home and hotel

occupants and urban squatters turned streets, the loci of manifestation of Arbab's power, into a site of battle in the first decade of the revolution. In fact, there is a tension at the centre of the urban. On the one hand, it dictated its rule over city dwellers and, on the other hand, it is appropriated by the dispossessed.

Along with the dispossessed who, as mentioned before, attempted to deterritorialise and reterritorialise the urban areas, were women who, also, made (and are making) an attempt to appropriate the urban. This is particularly important since at least one basis of the 1979 revolution was rooted in Islamifying the urban. To accomplish this goal nothing was more symbolic than the hijab. In effect, the hijab was dislocated from Islamic ideology that had to imbue the urban with its signs and symbols. The next section aims at presenting this fight over appropriating space in the first decade of the revolution. It seems necessary to me to point out that the hijab problem was (and is) merely one façade of the ongoing and incessant challenge between these two camps, i.e. women and the Islamic state. Here, I shall merely focus, among everything, on one momentary event namely the hijab protest in 1979. But, it must not lead us to believe that women's resistance is exhausted in this particular form of action as Sadeghi, along with other women's social movements, talks of women's organisations, silent protest, and the politics of presence as other types of resistant actions of women after the revolution (Sadeghi, 2011: 69).

#### **4-3-5- Hijab protest**

The sweet taste of the revolution did not last more than one month. On 8<sup>th</sup> May, Tehran witnessed the first signs of conflict between Islamification and women presence in Arbab space. Celebrating women day, some thousands women went out to protest against compulsory hijab (Keyhan, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1979). Furthermore, Ettela'at newspaper documented some dispersed protests in various female schools for and against compulsory hijab. These protests were mostly hold at the centre and north of Tehran (Ettela'at, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1979). Iranian National Airline employers, also, took part in the protest. Chanting "our purity is our real hijab", one of the employees said that "the state should do something about thought hijab rather than appearance hijab" (Ettela'at, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1979). In the same day, Keyhan reports, while there were snow all over Tehran, Revolutionary Guard fired warning shots trying to disperse some 15,000 female demonstrators who had aggregated outside the office of prime minister. On the way to the office, women were attacked by some 200 people who opposed them on hijab issue (Keyhan, 1979, 8<sup>th</sup> March).

To give a more complete picture, we should go one day back when Ayatollah Khomeini gave a speech in Qom, religious centre of Iran, on the issue of Hijab. On 7<sup>th</sup> March, he raised the issue for the first time:

"In an Islamic ministry there must not be any sin. In an Islamic ministry women must not be unclothed [hijabless], women can go to work but they must work with hijab. It does not matter if women want to work, but they must keep the Islamic code of dress." (Ayatollah Khomeini, 7 March 1979)

Determining a dress code for women, Khomeini was going to regulate the post-revolutionary space based on Islamic logic. In fact, the process of Islamic construction of space had begun a few weeks before the hijab speech through nullification of some articles of Family Protection Law (FPL).



Enacted in 1967, FPL was originally composed of a set of progressive laws granting women rights such as the right to divorce, increasing the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18, conditioning the right of polygamy to the consent of the former wives, and so on. However, two weeks after the downfall of Shah regime, Khomeini asked the minister of justice to review the FPL and abolish those articles that contradicted Islamic canon (Sanasarian, 1981: 124). Annulment of FPL along with announcement of compulsory hijab sparked the discontent of secularist women and set the basis for 8<sup>th</sup> May demonstration. Subsequently, on Women Day, “women employees of the Foreign Ministry gathered outside the ministry protesting the decree. Furthermore, an estimated 5000 to 8000 women gathered at Tehran University demonstrating against Khomeini’s authoritarian decree” (Sanasarian, 1981:125). In 5-day protest women demanded for equal wages and work opportunity, asking for the right to choose what to wear and for keeping FPL on operation (Ibid: 125). The charismatic leadership of Khomeini, however, did not let the protest to be extended any further as if the revolution had been embodied in the face of Khomeini. So, the urban did not tolerance any signs of transgression from promises of the revolution, e.g. Islamified streets. Being seen as a symbol of a westoxificated woman, neither were hijabless women supported by two major leftist organisations, the Mujahedeen and the Fadaeian. In its proclamation on Hijab Protest, The Union of Revolutionary Combatant Women, a newly born leftist group, we have:

“... wearing on removing hijab is not the key concern of our revolutionary women... our fight against cultural colonialism that had made our women like consumer goods is as important as our fight for our rights, if it is not more important than it. A combatant woman is never involved with putting make up on her face.”

This passage clearly shows that how leftist discourse on negating West colonialism enhanced Islamic ideology wiping out hijabless women from Arbab space.

In two other unsuccessful attempts, women aggregated seeking to intervene in the process of making space as they wished in December 1979 and July 1980. However, as it was expected, both attempts were confronted with a bloc of Islamism and revolutionism. Revolutionaries from both sides of the spectrum, that is Islamists and leftists, did not accept the presence of women as an independent element in Arbab space. In so doing, the post-revolutionary space was actualising its potential phallic characteristics. Women had to be devoid of their female identity merging into other pre-determined categories such as leftist combatant or Mother homeland if they were to participate in Arbab space. As described before, despite a few collective actions in the early years of the revolution, women were not able to independently mobilise any significant forces in order to meet their demands.

#### **4-4- Conclusion:**

The discussion of this chapter evolved around the question that how the forces of the production of Tehran were subordinated to the requirements of Islamification during revolutionary epoch. It has been attempting to show the extent to which the Islamic revolution was successful in creating its own space by negating pre-Islamic era. To answer these questions, two different fields namely practices and discourses have been touched upon. It is shown that how the revolutionary state spread its organs by means of nationalisation policy, confiscation of factories, and establishment of revolutionary institutions such as the Dispossessed foundation. Rejecting the modernisation from above of Pahlavi period which had widened the gap between poor and rich, the revolutionary state intended to establish the ideal of 'Classless Society of Divine Unity' (Behdad, 1988). This ideal had two different yet connected aims; to produce and spread the religious ideas and to realise the idea of justice.

The arguments of this chapter continues in three varied realms, that is spatial representation and practices, Islamic space, and the space of resistance, to express the production of post-revolutionary space in its totality. In this regard, first the land laws were reviewed and was showed that these laws were at work to implement the idea of social justice. In effect, the empirical findings revealed that against their claim of justice, this improvement has class characteristics and was particularly beneficial to those who fit the criteria of revolutionary Muslim or those who were state employees. But, regarding poor groups, the revolution and its ideal of social justice were just an opening possibility in which they needed to employ new tactics to satisfy their basic needs such as housing.

In terms of housing construction, it is discussed, one can witness a qualitative variation from pre-revolutionary period. In the former regime, home construction was followed by the policy of public housing funded by huge oil revenues. Furthermore, the main agencies in home construction before the revolution were the state and owners of big companies. However, after the revolution the state direct intervention and the role of the bourgeoisie were replaced with the logic of 'democratisation of home construction' through dispossession. The revolutionary state instead of getting involved in construction set the ground for individuals to construct their own homes. This was mediated through state intervention in land market by setting a ceiling on land ownership. In the aftermath of the intervention of the state in the land problem the number of landowners and residential building rapidly rose.

The democratisation of home construction means that urban development does no longer follow merely the logic of capital. Drawing on this notion, we may revise the underlying element of Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. Against this background, we must consider a new role of state in transforming the urban in favour of its faithful strata. Having its root in the

Islamic ideology, the post-revolutionary state was at work in the service of both social justice and development. The second part, the idea of development, proves that the Islamic revolution was not just negating the pre-revolutionary era, but also preserving it. This, also, manifests that while the logic of dialectic is a universal mode of thought, but it can have a particular content specific to certain geographies. Tehran's development, in this case, followed the logic of dialectic with a specific content composing of both the modern value of development and the Islamic idea of social justice. Nowhere does this bifurcation reveal itself better than the issue of hijab.

While the presence of women in public had become an indispensable element of Iranian modernity in the pre-revolutionary epoch, the Islamic ideology confronted with it in a way that constituted its dual characteristics. On the one hand, revolutionary space required women to remain at Andaruni or Ra'yaat space and, on the other hand, the modern value implied the visibility of them in Arbab space. The confrontation between the Islamic spirit and modern value was solved by the emergence of third term. The third term, namely hijab, came across as completing the triad dialectic of modernity-Islamification-hijab. In fact, the hijab mediated between modernisation and Islamification leading to a reconciliation between them. Since then, Arbab Space not only preserved an element of modernisation, that is the public presence of women, but also showed an element of Islamic space, that is the hijab. By hiding the bodies of women, the aim was to cover feminine traits of women from men's gaze in public spaces.

Therefore, as It is argued, the post-revolutionary Tehran should be read through Lefebvrian dialectic if we are to grasp it in its totality. In this regard, the Islamic revolution was at once a negation and preservation of the authoritarian modernisation of the pre-revolutionary epoch. Rejecting the linear understanding of time prevailed in liberal attitude toward temporality in

which the West was taken as the pioneer of development and the non-West has to follow its steps, this conception of Iranian transformation paves way for theorising an alternative modernity. To think of alternative modernity implies thinking with and also against Western tradition of thought, the tradition that stretches from Marx and Weber through Baudelaire and Benjamin to Habermas, Foucault, and many other Western thinker (Gaonkar, 2001). In so doing, one must first interrogate Western system of ideas since we are already within its boundaries. However, “to think through and to think against mean to think with a difference- a difference that would destabilize the universalist idioms, historicize the contexts, and pluralize the experience of modernity” (2001: 15).

# **Chapter 5: The Reconciliation of the Negated (Neoliberal Turn)**

## **5-1- Introduction**

In June 1990, a foreign commission including members of the IMF and World Bank arrived at Tehran airport. This was the first visit of an official commission to Iran since the 1979 revolution. A decade of political instability together with the huge expenditure of the war with Iraq, had given the revolutionary leaders of Iran a big budget deficit, namely around \$12 billion (Behdad & Noamani, 2006: 46). Increasing demand for basic needs, such as wheat and other agricultural crops, made the necessity to deflect from the ideal of the revolutionary Islamic economy inevitable. Having had economic independency and statism at its centre, the political economy of the first decade now needed to be replaced with a more efficient one. Two years before the official invitation to the IMF-World Bank officials in 1990, Iranian statesmen had begun to borrow from abroad in the form of usance. This was done secretly because the revolutionary spirit was against any type of foreign capital.

However, the acceptance of Resolution 598 in 1988, that announced the end of the war, was a symptom of the arrival of a new era. Economic indexes, according to a report conducted by the Plan and Budget Organisation (PBO), indicated the deteriorating condition of the Iranian economy at the time; oil revenue had dropped from \$20 billion in 1982 and 1983 to its lowest level since the early 1970s, at \$6.2 billion in 1986. Foreign-exchange reserves had fallen to less than \$7 billion. The state had experienced a 53% budget deficit (Amouei, 2006) and the current account balance had reached -\$5.1 billion (Behdad, :1999 in Alizadeh, 2000).

Following the ceasefire, however, the newly elected president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, called for a free market economy and introduced a new set of neoliberal policies. (Keyhan Havaei, 1991). The reconstruction of the country primarily required significant accumulated capital to be invested in industry and infrastructure and to pay for the importation of consumer goods.

Suffering from a budget deficit, the post-war state found the solution in what I would like to call 'the reconciliation of the negated'. Facing this internal contradiction, revolutionary Islamification embraced the West, the negated, although, merely in an economic domain. In this context, IMF-World Bank officials were invited to Tehran in order to inspect the economic situation of Iran and whether it was ready to be integrated into global markets. Having examined the Iranian economy, in July 1990, "IMF-World Bank experts reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) had undergone profound institutional, structural change". The report added that Iranians:

"expressed their determination to move forward with broadly based macro-economic adjustment, encompassing a strengthened role for the private sector and a step by step opening up of the economy" (Behdad & Noamani, 1996: 47).

Hence, a new page of post-revolutionary Iran was opened. In this chapter I will first touch on the political economy of the second decade of the revolution where this return of the West manifests itself more vividly than anywhere else. To do so, two different realms will be considered. First, a discursive realm in which the neoliberal turn is implemented in legislation and laws. In particular, the First Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (post-revolutionary Parliament) in 1990 is reviewed. The actuality and externalisation of this move toward the West makes up the second realm to be examined. Drawing on economic variables such as class mobility, the change in private and public capital, privatisation, etc., the impact of imposing structural adjustment on Iran's economy is analysed. After discussing the political and economic implications of the neoliberal policies, this chapter will bring urban problematic into consideration. It will be argued as to



how the return and embracement of the West, in the form of technical knowledge and professional procedures, had affected the urban situation.

## **5-2- Political Economy of the post-war era**

As mentioned previously, in mid-1986, the PBO was ordered to conduct a study on the future of Iran's economy. Subsequently, the Office of Macroeconomics, an internal section within the PBO, was established to provide a "10-year prospect of macroeconomics" projection for the major macroeconomic variables such as per capita income, inflation, budget balance, and foreign trade. The 10-year prospect, as it were, gave a disappointing picture of Iran's economy (Amouei, 2006). Showing a significant fall in real national income and non-GDP per capita by 58% and 32% respectively (Central Bank, 2003), the report laid all the blame on the state-led economy of the war period. The report was presented to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, as proving inefficiency of the existing policies. In fact, the 10-year report provided by western-educated technocrats was aimed at convincing the men in power to put an end to the fruitless war. Although the extent to which the report affected Khomeini's decision to accept the ceasefire resolution in 1988 is debatable, there is no doubt that it furnished the foundation for emerging economic liberalisation. Subsequently, the PBO became the driving force of fully-fledged liberalism. Against this context, the First Development Plan covering the period from 1989 to 1993 was designed by the PBO and enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly in 1990.

### **5-2-1- The First Development Plan**

The chief mission of the First Development Plan (FDP) was to tackle the deteriorating condition of the post-war economy including its reliance on decreasing oil revenues, massive budget deficits and increasing rate of liquidity, huge state spending, uncontrolled inflation, extending inequalities in income distribution, low efficiency of domestic production, upcoming foreign debt maturity, disorganised taxation, and the high rate of population growth in company with rising unemployment. Confronting these issues, the FDP made a neoliberal turn to wrestle with them. According to the official document, as Ahmadi and Mehrgan report, there are at least 52 articles in the First Development Plan strengthening structural adjustment policy (2004).

In its introduction, the FDP outlines its objectives encompassing regeneration of the economy, reconstruction of the war-damaged regions, encouraging private investment, liberalising trade and foreign exchange (Alizadeh, 1994: 6). The opening page of the FDP carrying the title of Macro Picture of the Plan begins with the ideal of economic growth, and the underlying principle of the structural adjustment programme, as the main goal of the FDP. It highlighted the fact that the average annual rate of growth in GDP would be 8.1% by 1993 (PBO, 1989). The FDP, also, planned to facilitate the growth in investment and to decrease the share of private consumption in GDP. The FDP's quantitative objectives are summarised in Table 1:

**Table 5-1: First Development Plan (billions rials, constant 1989 prices)**

|                                    | 1989    | 1990  | 1991    | 1992    | 1993    | Annual Average |
|------------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| GDP                                | 24289.5 | 26531 | 28345.9 | 30746.7 | 33314.6 | 8.1            |
| Per capita GDP<br>(thousand rials) | 449.7   | 475.7 | 493.1   | 518.2   | 543.1   | 4.9            |
| Gross domestic fixed investment    | 4132    | 5451  | 5610    | 5596    | 5663    | 11.6           |
| Private consumption                | 13560   | 14191 | 15137   | 16245   | 17485   | 5.7            |
| Public consumption                 | 2772    | 3021  | 3107    | 3269    | 3488    | 3.8            |

(Source: Plan and Budget Organisation, 1990)

Although the FDP emphasises that, along with economic growth, the requirements of social justice are taken into consideration (FDP, 1989), in effect, the notion of social justice is eclipsed by the belief of Iranian technocrats in the trickle-down effect implicit in the IMF's policy. Masoud Nili, the vice-president of the PBO at the time, however, rejected the influence of international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank in the FDP stating that "other factors such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and World Bank recommendation that is allegedly said to be effective in setting the context for structural adjustment policies had never played any role in the process of decision making" (Salam Newspaper, 5<sup>th</sup> Ordibehesht 1998). Nili seems to equate the Western influence with direct authoritative command. Beyond this type of intervention, however, we must bring into light the other forms of influence conceptualised by current scholars such as policy mobility or planning travelling; transferring of knowledge,

techniques, and expertise from one place to another. In this respect, Nili and his organisation, the PBO, acted as knowledge actors “who supply a knowledge terrain that cultivates a receptive ground for policy adoption” (Jacobs, 2012: 3). Taking economic adjustment as a solution to Iranian economic stagnation, even if it had not come directly from the IMF’s advice, this knowledge was injected into and consolidated in Iranian consciousness through various local knowledge actors. Javad Larijani, a Parliament deputy at the time, for instance, talked of four underlying principles of the FDP. The first principle is a movement toward a free economic market aiming at developing production capacity through opening a space for the private sector. The second principle is to absorb private investment and enhance it. Privatisation makes up the third principle and the last one is social welfare (Resalat Newspaper, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1993: 15).

The domination of neoliberal consciousness is also manifested in a collection of laws passed by different authorities. Here, these laws are classified into four categories; foreign debt, fiscal and monetary policies, international trade and the private sector. I shall go through each of these fields showing the growing divergence from the state-led economy of the war period.

### **5-2-2- Foreign debt**

It has been already been mentioned that during the war period there was a negative view toward any contact with the West, whether it be financial or political. Several Iranian officials were put in jail or even executed due to the simple reason of attempting to communicate with their Western counterparts, in particular American, during the early years of the revolution.<sup>2</sup> Following this, foreign debt was seen as a regeneration of the dependent capitalistic economy

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<sup>2</sup> - The most famous one, among them, was Abbas Amir-Entezam the spokesman and deputy prime minister of the first Cabinet of the revolution in 1979.

of the Shah era. Hossein Ali Montazeri, a member of the Revolutionary Council and deputy to the Supreme Leader, attributed foreign borrowing to selling the country to foreigners (Keyhan, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1989). Despite this negative atmosphere, toward the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the crisis of the budget deficit left no other choice than borrowing from the West. Fearing the scandalous result of this being divulged, Iranian officials had to secretly borrow from the West in the form of usance<sup>2</sup> in 1987. By 1989, the year<sup>4</sup> of the FDP proposal, the sum of Iranian debt to the West accounted for some \$12.9 billion (Amouei, 2006: 448). The unfair conditions of usance, including high interest rates and short-term maturities, however, gave the agents of neoliberal thought a platform to condemn the taboo of Iran-West relationships. This was the first step toward publicising the economic liberalisation programme of neoliberal agents. Following this, Hashemi Rafsanjani, the newly elected president, denounced the past economic policy and called for a new approach: “Now the country is faced with various crises including capital flight and budget deficit caused by leftist revolutionary policies” (Gharakhani, 1390: 50). He added that Islam neither believes in a state-led economy nor a free market. Islamic economy, instead, is based on the private sector and individuals supervised and controlled by the state so that it will not be deflected from the road of justice (Gharakhani, 1390). Giving Islam new meaning, this emerging approach, in fact, set the foundation for consolidation of the structural adjustment discourse manifested in the FDP.

Against this context, the FDP foresaw a total of \$27.4 billion in foreign financing to fund its development projects (FDP, 1989: 60 in Ghasemi, 1992: 601). Foreign financing was planned to be invested in industry (\$7.5 billion), agriculture (\$1.5 billion), oil and gas sector (\$3.2

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<sup>2</sup> In the context of Iran usance refers to a short-term debt. In some cases, the date of maturity reached to less than 6 months

billion), dam construction (\$3 billion), and mining (\$10 billion) (FDP, 1989). Moreover, the FDP opened the doors of Iranian industries, mainly in the gas and oil fields, to foreign companies so that both parties could benefit from this market that had just been integrated into the global market economy. Nevertheless, the access for international companies and institutions was not completely granted since not all tensions between Iran and the West had faded away. Alizadeh argues that toward the end of the First Plan, it had become clear that much of these provisional foreign investments did not actually happen due to the threat of the USA and her right to veto (Alizadeh, 1994: 7). Nor should the return of the West be considered as a symptom of the elimination of political Islam in the post-war era after all. On the contrary, the confrontation of political Islam with neoliberal consciousness must be read through Lefebvrian dialectic. As Lefebvre holds, in the third phase of dialectical logic, negation of the negation, one would find certain elements of the first and the second phase, although, in a different set of relationships. Taking Lefebvrian dialectic as a tool of analysis, it follows that neoliberalism had *aufgehoben* political Islam, that is once negated, preserved, and transcended. I shall return to this logic by showing the emergent space of the post-war period which carried at the same time elements of neoliberalism and political Islam.

### **5-2-3- Privatisation**

As was shown in the previous chapter, the war period was configured in a way that left a minimum degree of freedom for the private sector. The Organisation of National Industry was subsequently established in accordance with the logic of nationalisation. A break with this logic, however, occurred with the new state interpretation of Article 138 of the constitution in 1991. Article 138 holds:

“In addition to instances in which the Council of Ministers or a single minister is authorized to frame procedures for the implementation of laws, the Council of Ministers has the right to lay down rules, regulations, and procedures for performing its administrative duties, ensuring the implementation of laws, and setting up administrative bodies. Each of the ministers also has the right to frame regulations and issue circulars in matters within his jurisdiction and in conformity with the decisions of the Council of Ministers. However, the content of all such regulations must not violate the letter or the spirit of the law” (The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Iran).

The new interpretation set a legal context for implementation of the privatisation programme. Following this, the sale of shares of state-owned companies was put on the agenda by the state. The transference of the ownership of such companies had at once two purposes. First, it reduced the expenditure raised by the state and, secondly, it provided the state with a new way of compensating for its budget deficit. In 1991, the state issued an act announcing its decision to privatise some 400 state-owned companies. Subsequently, in Budget Law (1991) the privatisation was designed as a new source of state revenue. By the beginning of the Second Development Plan in 1995, from the total of 312 companies under the ownership of the Organization of National Industry 222 were privatised (Mortazavi, 1995). Moreover, there were some 3500 billion rials earnings from privatisation between 1991 and 1996 (Pajohan, 2008).

Despite the domination of neoliberal rationality at the time and its massive propaganda on the efficiency and the necessity of privatisation policies as the only reliable route toward progress and development, its success was called into question by later studies. A survey of 42 privatised companies in 1996 showed that most of these companies still relied highly on the national bank system and state aid in order to deal with their financial issues. Furthermore, the production of 50% of the companies in question did not increase during the period under study. In the context of exports of products, neither did they achieve any significant success since the export rate of

72% of these privatised companies remained unchanged and only 23% of them increased their exports. Neither did privatisation produce any major achievement in respect to investment rate. Among 42 companies studied only 25% of them grew their investment. This study also revealed that the transference of public property into private hands led to the reduction of work forces by an average of 10% (1996, Razaghi).

The privatisation programme was further pushed by advocating the establishment of private banks. In 1994 the state granted the right to establish certain types of private banks and debt funds. In the next chapter I shall discuss this in more detail.

#### **5-2-4- Trade liberalisation**

Alongside the privatisation programme and reliance on foreign debt, there was a tendency toward trade liberalisation. In effect, exchange rate policies underwent a massive transformation which paved the way toward trade liberalisation. In 1989, the first step toward a floating exchange rate was taken by announcing a new competitive exchange rate. While the average rate of exchange in the previous decade was between 65 to 75 rials, the new competitive exchange rate went up to 1000 rials for raw materials and 845 rials for certain consumer goods. Moreover, a new market exchange rate was set up by the state for importation of other goods (Noshirvani, 1995: 6). This almost 12 times increase in the exchange rate signalled the determination of the state to follow its liberalisation programme and, consequently, implementation of structural adjustment policies. By 1993, the former exchange rate policy was replaced by a single rate of exchange which amounted to 1750 rials corresponding to the market



price (Yousefi, 2011). This was to eradicate the last barrier on the transference of capital so that it could easily cross national borders.

Removal of restrictions on the floating exchange rate set the ground for free trade. Soon after the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq in 1989, barriers on certain imported goods of which importation had been either unauthorised or liable to heavy obstacles were eradicated by the state. This trend gradually prevailed in the country so that the number of goods imported in the floating exchange rate soared. Where imported goods were shipped on market price, furthermore, no restrictions were applied. Following this, procurement and distribution centres which had been established in the first decade of the revolution to reinforce the nationalisation policy were removed in 1991.

In terms of exports, also, the state employed a deregulation policy. In 1990, certain restrictions on export regulation, in particular on foreign exchange earnings, were lifted. While the export of state-subsidised goods and certain agricultural products was still banned, in the aftermath of the establishment of a single rate of exchange the number of exportable goods rose. The establishment of Free Trade Zone and tax exemptions along with bank facilities for exports, furthermore, were put on the agenda to encourage exporters (Noshiravani, 1995).

Along with the transformation of trade regulation, pricing regulation, underwent a massive change. Within one year after the ceasefire, in accordance with rising imports and with a floating exchange rate the number of goods liable to price ceiling regulations dropped dramatically from 296 to 22 (Noshiravani, 1995: 54). Even those goods which were still liable to price control regulation had their own competitive market. Moreover, in the same period another objective of the FDP to increase the price of goods and services of state-led companies to the level of the

market was relatively realised. The cost of flights, trains, post, telephone, water and electricity rose as a consequence. This trend was followed until 1993 when the rising of public discontent stemming from increasing inflation and expenditure forced the state to stop its free market policies.

### **5-3- The land question**

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, the question of land proved to be crucial once again. The trend of transference of land and occupation by the dispossessed could not be endured in the era of neoliberal consciousness. The introduction of new logic, to use Lefebvre's word, produced and reproduced its own space.

Bringing the land question into consideration, in this section I shall begin with the level of legislation. Then I wish to move toward the level of reality showing how land discourses were practiced and materialised within the city. My reading of these practices and materialisation will go through a critique of the political economy. Finally the section will draw our attention to the way city dwellers in general and the marginalised in particular responded to the newly produced space. In the last part forms of resistance in the post-war era will be considered and described.

#### **5-3-1- Level of legislation:**

##### **5-3-1-1- Independency of City Hall**

Until the mid-1980s the governance of Tehran's administration area was in the hands of the state. The Surveillance Council of Tehran Expansion, established in 1973, was in charge to

manage and control central issues such as the unprecedented expansion of Tehran and to plan for urban development. Interior, Power and Housing ministries along with the governor who worked under the supervision of the prime minister made up the members of the Surveillance Council which ruled over Tehran until 1988.

However, some years before that, in the 48th summit of the Surveillance Council, the Council agreed to a proposal declaring City Hall autonomy. In the provisional Act we have:

“Imposing Western-led economy and lifestyle to a society that has still its root in its own social tradition has led to a kind of anarchy and inconsistency in urban structure. Coexistence of these two inconsistent systems without a single coherent urban planning [policy] has made so many problems for Tehran. Mushrooming of apartments accompanied with using private transport, various roads and highways next to the traditional system of Bazaar and Mahaleh with its peculiar social relations, or the expansion of urban fabric without development of public transportation are only some examples of this conflictual situation.” (Summary of the Act of City Hall Autonomy, 1986)

The autonomy of City Hall was meant to create consistency particularly in the area of administration and services. However neither administrative procedures nor autonomous management changed the fate of Tehran more than the logic of economic independency did. In effect, the post-revolutionary Tehran can be divided into two periods revolving around the City Hall Independency Act of 1989. Before the ratification of the Independency Act, the City Hall of Tehran was highly reliant on government budgets. In the late 1980s, the annual budget of Tehran was around 5 to 7 billion toman, However, it “needed an immediate infusion of 12BT (billion toman) to avoid bankruptcy” (Ehsani, 1999). Ehsani also reports that the quality of the City Hall services was minimal and mediocre so that made Tehran a polluted, spatially fragmented and overcrowded city (Ehsani, 1999: 23).

However, in the era of neoliberal domination the subsidised budget of the City Hall could not be allocated as such. The appointment of a new mayor, Gholamhossein Karbaschi, in the early 1990s, marked a turning point in the history of the governance of Tehran. Having the ideal of Western cities before his eyes, Karbaschi's aim was to turn Tehran into a liveable place. Following this, he launched impressive planning projects, urban renewal, and beautification of Tehran by means of embourgeoisement of urban areas. Later on, it will be shown that the City Hall Independency Act acted as an excuse for the City Hall to follow its ambitious urban projects through huge privatisation of services and, more importantly, selling the space of Tehran to private hands. As a result, the budget of City Hall rose from 4.9 to 200 billion toman within 10 years (Table 2).

**Table 5-2: Tehran City Hall budgets**

|  | <b>1986-1987</b> | <b>1989-1990</b> | <b>1991-1992</b> | <b>1996-1997</b> | <b>1997-1998</b> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total budget (billion toman)</b>                | 4.9              | 7.1              | 30.1             | 234.6            | 200              |
| <b>Development budget as share of total budget</b> | 26%              | 28%              | 63%              | 83%              | 63%              |

(Source: Tehran City Hall, 1999 in Ehsani, 1999: 24)

### **5-3-1-2- Master Plan of Tehran**

In the early years of the Islamic Revolution, the pro-dispossessed rhetoric at once promised people the ideal of free lands to dwell in and violated the urban regulations and protocols of the old Master Plan of Tehran that had been approved in the 1960s. Following this, the old set of rules was replaced by the rule of “two storeys height above ground” which applied to all

residential buildings within the boundaries of Tehran. Against this background, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development began to revise the last Tehran Master Plan and to design a new one in the mid-1980s. The study of the so-called Maintaining and Organising Plan of Tehran (MOP) was finalised in 1991 and approved one year later by the Supreme Council of Urban Development. The MOP was essentially designed due to the interruption of the urban planning system in the revolutionary atmosphere and the unprecedented growing population. The structure of the MOP was, then, based on the old Master Plan of Tehran with revision of its two main principles, namely, linear expansion of Tehran and imposing a ceiling on population growth which had by far exceeded the planned measure determined in the last Master Plan. Proposed in 1966, according to the trend of the growing population, the first Master Plan estimated that Tehran's population would reach 5.5 million by 1991 (Zoeshtieagh, 1998). However, by 1986 it had already exceeded the estimated measure by 550,000 people. Therefore, the need to curb the increasing population seemed essential. In so doing, there were two missions to be achieved by the MOP; the first was to introduce a new urban spatial planning to Tehran according to its emergent requirements and the second was to apply a series of regulations in order to limit population absorption. On the latter subject the following set of restrictions was suggested by the MOP:

- 1- To determine 7.65 million people as a saturation point for the Tehran population
- 2- Transference of polluting industries and storehouses to the outside of Tehran boundaries
- 3- To impose restrictions on the development of emergent industries within the urban fabric
- 4- To reduce the fertility rate through promotion of health services and education
- 5- To establish new urban areas in the same region
- 6- To return war refugees to their hometown (Zoeshtieagh, 1998: 40)

Aiming at decreasing the share of Tehran's population in the region, the MOP determined 94.73 square metres as an optimal urban area per capita and 674.09 square kilometres as the total area of Tehran (Zoeshtieagh, 1998: 60). Therefore, the suggested population by the MOP accounted for 7,115,908 people which was around 534,000 people less than the Supreme Council of Urban Development has earlier approved. This half a million people, who did not have a place within Tehran, the MOP added, must be exported outside Tehran's official borders (Ibid, 1998). So, alongside the policy of preventing population growth rate, a complementary plan had to be devised to cover the exported people. This problem led the MOP to widen its scale to include a new regional standpoint toward urban planning of Tehran.

Concerned about the expansion of Tehran, the MOP emphasised regional-scale planning and long term development. To do so, they proposed the construction of a series of small towns around Tehran so that the surplus population of Tehran could be directed into them. Accordingly, in early 1990, the Supreme Council of Urban Development passed a law indicating the necessity of constructing five new towns in the urban region of Tehran (Zoeshtieagh, 1998). In the next section I shall deal with the practical results of this policy explaining the way in which this line of policy-making led to the deportation of workers and low-income classes to the suburbs.

In the meantime, there was another dominant theme in the MOP which, in addition to the law of Economic Independency of City Hall, resulted in a tremendous transformation of Tehran. To hinder urban sprawl, the MOP called for a vertical expansion of the city as an alternative option to accommodate the estimated growing population within Tehran. In its conclusion, the MOP emphasised the need "to reduce the density of dense neighbourhoods of Tehran and to increase the density of less dense neighbourhoods through constructing high-rise buildings and

increasing floor area ratio of residential buildings outside centres of services” (Zoeshtieagh, 1998: 45). Furthermore, the MOP continued, “in contrast to the policy of stabilisation of the area of residential plots, the policy of increasing floor area ratio applies to meet the requirements of housing development” (Ibid, 45). Following this, the MOP highlighted the necessity of improvement and application of novel technologies in construction of high-rise and mass-produced buildings in the hope of providing the middle classes of Tehran with 75,000 new residential units annually (Ibid: 48).

In addition to the policies in question, the MOP suggested some other solutions for the urban development of Tehran. These included the announcement of pre-1966 constructions as old and run-down buildings liable to be replaced by new ones. In the following years, this policy was stripped from its vague shell and was conferred under the label of gentrification (Ibid: 58).

South-eastern agricultural lands, also, did not remain hidden from the MOP’s sight. These lands, which were placed outside Tehran, were considered to be the last solution for the urban development of Tehran to compensate for the lack of enough lands for services within the already-determined boundaries of the city (Zoeshtieagh, 1998: 63).

As has been described, Tehran, as an object of the MOP’s analysis was, after some 20 years, treated as a site of policy-making again. It became a medium marking the return of state technostucture rationality:

“Everything is being sacrificed to this form of growth: the historical past, convenience, amusement, “culture”. The historical city is rebuilt according to the demands of growth “impelled” by the automobile. Automobile and construction lobbies join forces with the state technostucture.” (Lefebvre, 2009:237)

### **5-3-2- Level of practices**

“What remains from an ideology if it cannot manifest itself in the space?”

Lefebvre, the production of space

The emergence of this new discourse had to be spatialised if it was to be lasting and become dominant. In keeping with this objective, emerging neoliberal thought manifested in the First Development Plan, the Independency of City Hall, and the Maintaining and Organising Plan of Tehran found its way into the built environment. In so doing, a coalition of international agents such as the IMF and the World Bank and national forces including the state bureaucracy, technocrats, and land speculators was created. This coalition revealed just how much this new wave of urban renovation was based on a class strategy. They “mobilized property wealth around the city, the entrance without restriction into exchange and exchange value of the ground and housing” (Lefebvre, 1996: 77). In this section I address the class implications of these urban projects. Drawing on a political economy critique, it will be shown that the domination of exchange value over use value led to a deepening north-south gulf, de-urbanisation and peripherisation of the lower classes along with growing shanty houses and satellite settlements around Tehran.

#### **5-3-2-1- Political economy of urban construction**

In the era of structural adjustment, the law of Independency of City Hall meant that instead of the state and oil revenues City Hall had to rely on the society to cover its expenditure. Society, however, rather than being a fully integrated whole is composed of different strata and classes.



Putting the burden on Tehranis who had already suffered from the destructive consequences of the war and trade embargo, without considering the various classes, seemed very unreasonable. In addition to fragile economic conditions, we must take into account that the whole societal and communal ideology uniting the nation against the common enemy was slowly fading away. In the course of hegemonisation of development and progress rhetoric, the idea of the common good was sacrificed for the ideal of individuality and self-interest. For this reason, the City Hall of Tehran decided to choose its partners from among upper class Tehranis in general and land speculators in particular. Following this, Karbashchi, the head of Tehran City Hall at the time, exempted the latter from various regulations and zoning codes such as determined floor area ratio and land use. Hence there was an appearance of high-rise buildings and massive land use changes in the second decade of the revolution. The coalition of the City Hall, as a part of the state apparatus, and private investors and speculators was just the beginning of selling of the urban space, both vertical and horizontal. It reminds us of Marx's words that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx, 2002: 221). Allied with urban developers and building constructors, the City Hall was, in effect, submitted to the requirements of this fragment of the society. As a result, after two years since the appointment of a new mayor in 1990, the budget of Tehran City Hall rose five times to 40 BT (billion tomans) (Madanipour, 1997). This trend continued during the ensuing year so that the budget soared to 70 BT (Ibid, 1997). Ehsani reports that "three quarters of the new revenues came from the sale of residential permits that were in explicit violation of zoning laws" (Ehsani, 1999). These violations, he adds, included more than anything else commercialisation of public lands and selling of the skyline of the city. Most of this collected revenue was invested in urban projects and infrastructure.

The success of the City Hall in absorbing wandered capital and pumping it into urban space became a pattern for Iran's economy. Ever since, regardless of its class nature, the construction sector was seen as an engine to produce surplus value and mitigate increasing trends of unemployment. Consequently, private investment rose 15 times and the number of employees nearly doubled (Ehsani, 1999). Furthermore, the number of built cultural facilities reached 138. Tehran City Hall, also, built 27 sports centres and turned 1,300 wasted lots into local sports fields (Ehsani, 1999: 25). This trend of urban transformation coupled with the discourse of beautification of public space led to a flourishing of green areas within the city. The result was the escalation of the number of parks from 184 in 1990 to 628 in 1998. Moreover, forest planting and other green spaces skyrocketed from 872 to almost 24,000 hectares in the same period.

The same line of policy was at work in the other realms of urban infrastructure such as public services and transportation. As statistics show, in terms of water drainage there were 122 km tunnels and channels completed and three times more garbage collected in Karbashchi's era. Also, more than 8,000 polluting small factories were exported outside Tehran. In the same period, the length of built expressways was tripled and the number of public transportation rose from 22,000 to 32,500 (Ehsani, 1999: 24-25).

Table 3 below gives a broader picture of Tehran's transformation in Karbashchi's period:

**Table 5-3: Tehran City Hall Record**

| <b>Tehran's City Hall</b>                              | <b>1990</b> | <b>1990-1998</b> | <b>Cost (Billion Toman)</b> |
|--|-------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Public Health</b>                                   |             |                  |                             |
| Water Drainage   | 118         | 240              | 11                          |
| Garbage Collection                                     | 2           | 6                |                             |
| <b>Transportation</b>                                  |             |                  |                             |
| Number of interchanges, bridges, over- and underpasses | 33          | 220              | 50                          |
| Expressways  | 90          | 300              | 40                          |
| Public transportation                                  | 22,000      | 32,500           |                             |
| <b>Public Spaces</b>                                   |             |                  |                             |
| Public buildings                                       | 3,560       | 2,500,000        | 40                          |
| Parks  | 184         | 628              | 2                           |
| Forest planting  | 872         | 20,000           |                             |
| Green spaces   | -           | 4,000            |                             |
| Cultural centres                                       | -           | 138              | 2 (Maintenance)             |
| Neighbourhood sports fields                            | -           | 1,300            |                             |
| Navab  | -           | 460,000          | 70                          |

(Source: Ehsani, 1999:25)

### **5-3-2-2- Commercialisation of urban space**

The late 1980s and early 1990s are conceptualised here as the reconciliation of the negated, namely modernisation of the old regime, and the negating, namely revolutionary Islamification.

After nearly a decade gap, the First Development Plan of the revolution was finally codified

and put into action in the late 1980s. Facing with the increasing population, the most immediate necessity was to overcome the problem of the housing shortage within Tehran. This, however, set the context for investors and speculators to turn the city into a profitable commodity. It has already been mentioned that the latter group in company with Tehran City Hall planned to channel their capital into the built environment by transgressing zone codes and creating vertical expansion. Soon after, the political economy of verticality found its supplement i.e. the political economy of horizontality. Therefore, the expansion of Tehran toward the west and commercialisation of this area were put into the agenda (Azari, 2012).

In order to make these commercial spaces more accessible the construction of roads and motorways was suggested. The emergence and domination of motorways changed the rhythm of everyday life and brought into urban consciousness the concept of acceleration. In tune with the requirements of accelerated life, the city sprawled correspondingly. So did the commercial spaces; hence was the simultaneous birth of giant malls and shopping centres and motorways. I will turn to the Navab motorway project as a symbolic example of this new urban mentality, but, at this point, I wish to present the commercialisation of Tehran. To do so, I will deal with the process of the mushrooming of shopping centres from the early 1990s.

Thanks to the parcelisation and specialisation of urban space along with the proliferation of digital and electronic products, the life of the commercialised streets of Tehran had been revived. However, substantial capital was to be channelled into newly constructed malls and shopping centres. Meanwhile, the role of City Hall as a prime investor and mover of urban projects was significant. A large number of these projects proceeding under the aegis of City Hall were later transferred into private hands. Through this process, which Harvey would call creative destruction, City Hall circulated its capital into development projects and inflated land

and property prices to its own advantage (Harvey, 2006). In his research, Azari recognises different types of commercial buildings constructed in this period. The first type refers to giant commercial complexes which arose in the north and west of Tehran. Like their former counterparts in the old regime, they were meant to present the glory of new Tehran. In fact, these huge structures, as Clark rightly noted, were mass produced to create a spectacular image in place of what had been destroyed (Clark, 1999). The mobilisation of the spectacle (and splendour), Harvey argues, was meant to mask and disguise the fundamentals of class relations (Harvey, 2006).

The Golestan Commercial Complex was perhaps the best case to exemplify this type of commercial space. In 1980, the construction of Golestan Complex began on confiscated land in the north of Tehran. The area of the land accounted for 2,100 square metres. When we add the area of floors to this, the total area of the Golestan Complex accounted for 7,300 square metres. It included 135 retail outlets selling mainly clothes, health and beauty products, and computers (Kazemi, 2009 ), unlike the Golestan Qa'em Shopping Centre.

Perhaps the boldest urban project in this period was the Navab project which cost around 70 billion tomans. Here, I will analyse this project in more detail showing its impact on the old urban fabric and old dwellers. Also, I wish to shed some light on its class nature to reveal the way in which urban projects in general and the Navab project in particular benefited certain groups at the expense of others.

### **Navab Highway Project:**

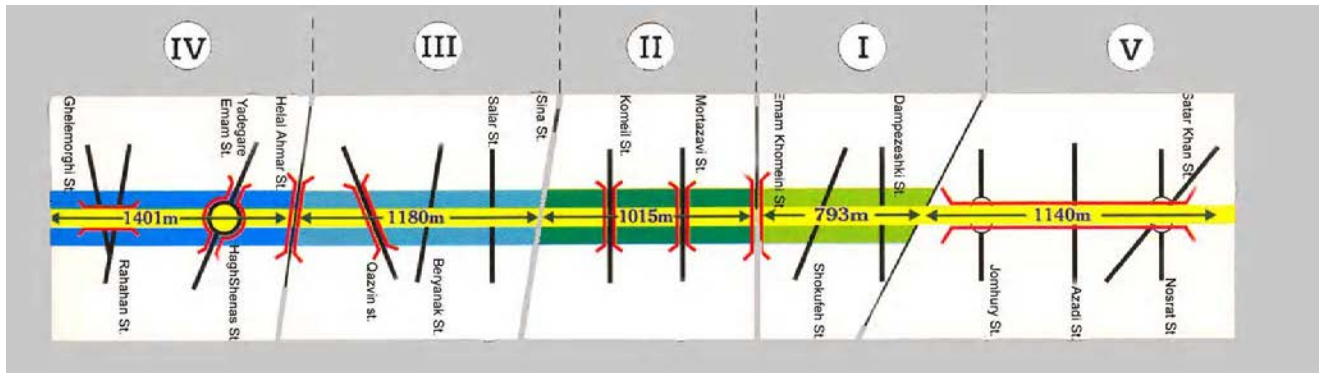
The initial draft of the Navab plan, comprising 800 hectares in area and 5.5 kilometres in length, incorporated some 20 mahallehs, an area within both sides of the Navab Highway, with a population of around 260,000 in 1996. The condition of the area before the implementation of the project is described by the *Atlas of Tehran Metropolis* as follows:

“Buildings constructed before 1966, semi-durable material, high population density, low rate of literacy among women, business, relatively high unemployment, migrants from the Caspian sea area. This group represents old central Tehran with a relatively traditional population” (Sazman fanavari etela’eat shahrdari Tehran. 2005).

The area contained a cohesive social, physical and cultural entity, consisting of several well-defined mahallehs with strong family and social relations, a sense of belonging, friendly neighbourhood relations, and unity. As it will be shown, this fabric was completely destroyed by the Navab Project (Sabari and Ghaem, 2000; Bahrainy and Ahmadzadeh 2007).

Historically, over the last 70 years, Navab Street, an old north-south street in central Tehran, has played an important role in linking different mahallehs. As Madanipour explains, “Navab was a wide street developed before the revolution as part of the expressway network of Tehran and the proposal, [at that moment], was to extend the street into the old dense fabric of the south-west of Tehran” (Madanipour, 1998: 61).

**Figure 5-1: Schematic plan of Navab Highway**



The first comprehensive plan of Tehran (1968) included a new north-south motorway to provide fast and easy access between the central and northern parts of the city. In this light, “the extension of the existing north-south Chamran motorway, further to the south, as a strategic plan to improve the transportation network in Tehran, has been part of the general planning activities of the City Hall of Tehran for a long time” (Bahrainy and Aminzadeh, 2007: 117). In the 1992 Maintaining and Organising Plan of Tehran, the construction of the motorway was reconfirmed and “it was to be one of four main highways, completing a ring around the central core of the city” (Bahrainy and Aminzadeh, 2007: 117) (Fig 5.1). However, the project contained important obstacles for any authority or organisation to make them hesitate in beginning the project. These obstacles were related to the scale of the project and the demolitions, and financial resources needed for its implementation.

In late 1992, the Municipality of Tehran finally adopted the plan and began its implementation. In addition to the motorway, they decided to develop the highway project into a new urban complex by constructing high-density residential, commercial and office buildings on both sides of the highway. “There were two main reasons behind this decision: to provide space for

relocated activities, mostly residential and commercial; and to provide the vast financial resources needed for the implementation of the project” (Tehran City Hall, 1992; in Bahrainy and Aminzadeh, 2007: 117). As Sabri and Gheam (2000) argue, the initial main objectives of the project, as indicated by the Municipality of Tehran and the principal architect, were as follows:

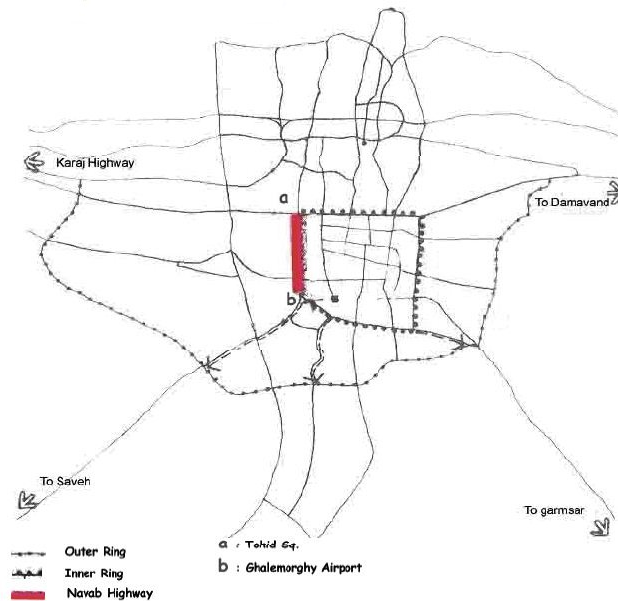
- To provide a fast and easy north–south vehicular access
- To secure financial resources through high-rise residential complexes
- To increase the quality of the environment and
- To rebuild old areas facing the new highway

Actual implementation of the project started in 1994 and was expected to be completed in four years. The project introduced more than 8,500 new residential units to the area, most of which were below 75 square metres. The high density development with high- and mid-rise buildings up to 19 storeys, provided some 750,000 square metres of residential and 160,000 square metres of commercial and office space. To achieve this, the project relied on the investment profit (75% net), City Hall of Tehran and the central government to finance the project. Also, existing property owners were subjected to compulsory purchase with prices much lower than market values (Bahrainy and Aminzadeh 2007: 117-118).

As is explained previously, the *mahalleh* system played an important role in the historical fabric of Tehran. Submitted to the requirements of exchange value, however, it has lost its previous meaning (containing residents regardless of their class and economic situation) after the invasion of urbanism, which resulted in new kinds of spatial segregation (north/south) in Tehran.



**Figure 5-2: Navab Highway**



Nevertheless, mahallehs did not disappear in Tehran's residents' everyday lives as they still had their own particular identities. This mostly happened in the areas with less immigrants/newcomers or where the immigrants shared the same ethnic backgrounds. This procedure was more observable in more deprived areas and also historical/traditional parts of the city such as the Navab area before the implementation of the project. As Sabri and Ghaem (2000) remark, Navab had a coherent social fabric before the implementation of the project. Based on the traditional mahalleh system, all of the 20 mahallehs had strong connections with one another as well as their own particular identities. Constructing the highway and high-rise buildings has changed the traditional fabric in this district. Accordingly,

“Navab project has caused a major discontinuity in the previously integrated fabric of this part of the city. This has led to a physical barrier in terms of the existing sidewalks and streets, and

also in a dissociation of neighbourhoods and social interactions, both within and between neighbourhoods. The project had ignored the daily life of the majority of its residents by totally transforming their built environment and social lives” (Sadatnia, 2011).

Evaluating the failure of the project, several reasons can be pointed out. Primarily, according to Afrouzmanesh’s report (2006), Navab’s housing was mainly intended for low- and medium-income buyers, but many of the previous residents who were a little bit wealthier were also displaced, making the area appear to be less desirable than the surrounding areas. Thus, the buildings were occupied by more deprived groups. This issue of displacement has resulted in the loss of a sense of belonging in Navab, and the lack of market interest intensifies the problem. In addition, the problem of displacement can be considered in the sense that the project has not benefited from an identifiable spatial structure: for example, it lacks a physical or functional centre. Traditionally, religious buildings have had important roles in order to construct a feeling of belonging and attach people to their mahalleh. As Jafarpour and Adabkhah (2005) claimed, unusually, the main mosque in Phases 1 and 2 of the project is overshadowed by the height of the buildings on either side. Three more mosques are located in Phase 4, which shows an uneven distribution of this important element. The mosques have few connections with other activities distributed along the highway. Additionally, due to the financial issues, anticipated cultural and educational land uses were eliminated and also the proposed parks and green spaces were not built and did not materialise since they were all uneconomic (Sadatnia, 2011).

Moreover, the architecture of Navab stresses its outsider/excluded characteristics. It demonstrates an urge to stand apart from its surroundings rather than be a part of it as it bears no relation to the nearby districts (Fig. 5.3 & 5.4). The architecture of Navab lacks almost all

of the significant elements which existed in residents' culture and habits. In that sense, Bahrainy and Ahmadzade believe that:

“Meaningful landmarks could also be regarded as influential elements of identity. Navab, due to the contrast between its physical characteristics and its context, has become a prominent landmark in the city, although not necessarily in a positive way. However, its legibility decreases considerably if it is observed from the inside. The uniformity of design makes it difficult to navigate unless one is very familiar with the area. Although different buildings are decorated in different colours, they convey no information to the observer, for they are uniform in spirit. Intersections, which normally act as nodes, have been either destroyed or transformed into concrete bridges” (2007: 121).

**Figures 5-3 and 5-4: Aerial photo of Navab Highway before and after construction**





As stated earlier, the main reason for constructing the Navab Highway was the provision of a major north-south access. However, it seems that the construction of the highway has caused major traffic problems and the number of vehicles passing through the highway has become one of the main reasons for creating spatial disconnection in the area in addition to the social disconnection. Traffic flow shows how the role of old Navab Street has changed.

**Table 5-4: Traffic volume in the Old Navab Street and the New Highway**

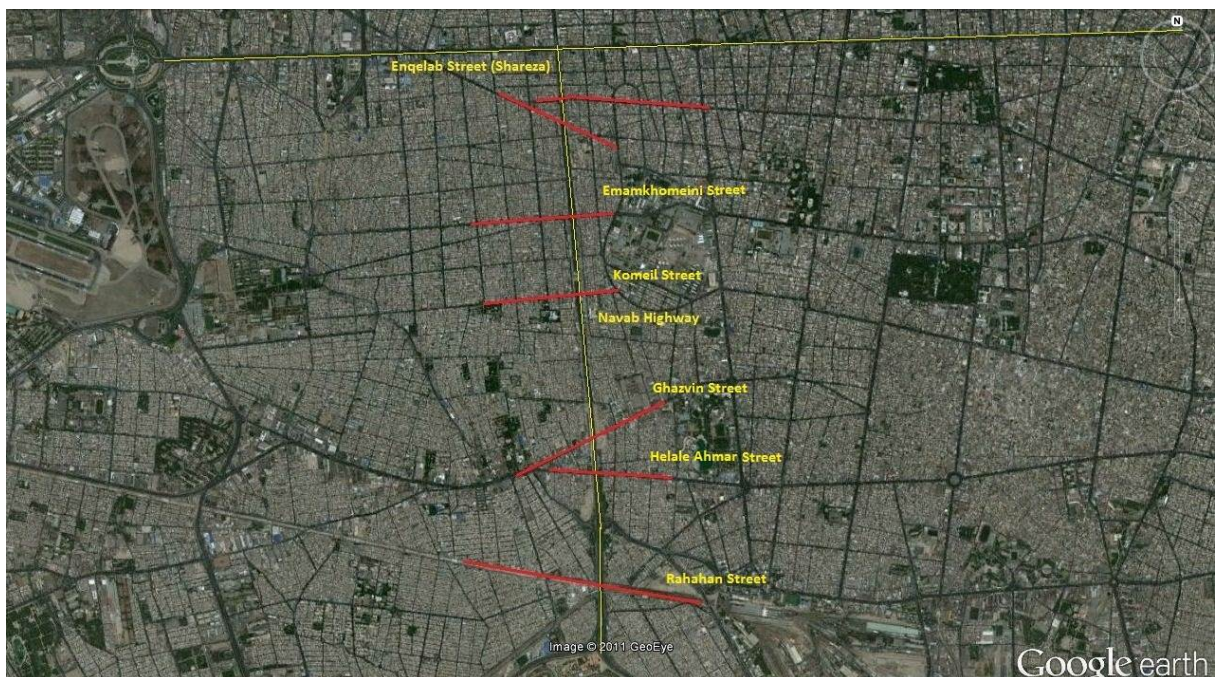
| <b>No. of Vehicles<br/>per hour</b><br><b>Locations</b> | <b>Navab<br/>Street (1)<br/>(1990)</b> | <b>Navab Highway<br/>(2) (2003)</b> |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Azadi St. to<br>Dampezeski St.                          | 830                                    | 2350                                |
| Dampezeski to Imam<br>Khomeini                          | 140                                    | 2580                                |
| Imam Khomeini to<br>Ghazvin                             | 330                                    | 2870                                |
| Ghazvin to Helale Ahmar                                 | 545                                    | 3020                                |
| Peak traffic hours                                      | 8-9 am                                 | 9-10 am                             |
| Dominant direction                                      | North to South                         | North to South                      |

(Bahrainy and Ahmadzadeh, 2007: 120)

According to the statistics, the Navab Highway now collects local traffic destined for the new urban transit road. No estimate was given in the project for the expected number of trips on the new highway. Furthermore, as Figure 5 shows, containing a large number of intersections and unusual exits and access roads feeding its surrounding areas, the Navab Highway has lost its true application and efficiency as a highway/motorway:

“Many factors influence the efficiency of the highway, such as the increase in the number of accidents due to the large number of intersections, the absence of taxi ranks in local lanes (forcing people to get in and out of taxis in the fast lanes), and an insufficient number of pedestrian crossings, causing people to cut across the road to get to the other side” (Bahrainy and Ahmadzadeh, 2007: 121).

**Figure 5-5: Navab Highway intersections**



On the other hand, many local streets in the area have been turned into dead ends, or cut in two by the highway making the local trips longer and resulting in heavy traffic (Sabri and Ghaem, 2000).

Eventually, it seems that this project has resulted in a catastrophe: breakdown in the physical and social fabric of the area. Saeed Sadatnia, one of the main designers of the master plan of the Navab Project believes that:

“... [F]rom the very beginning, I noticed them for the problems of the project and what would happen to people after the completion of the project, but the City Hall insisted to implement the project... if they constructed a boulevard instead of a highway, as people requested at the moment, people could appear in the urban open spaces and it would not cause the displacement of previous residents and eventually, destruct the historical identity of the whole district” (Sadatnia, 2011).

In that sense, it can be said that these new mega-structures that have replaced the small, single-storey traditional houses have created overwhelming, rigid huge walls on the sides of this vehicle corridor. The interaction between the east and west sides of the area has been severely damaged. There is no sign of the previous *mahalleh* fabric and cohesion anymore. It has disrupted their everyday lives and made it impossible to carry on with their lives as before.

#### **5-4- Conclusion**

The end of Iran/Iraq war in 1988 coincides with the termination of revolutionary epoch and is the beginning of the neoliberal period. In this chapter, I sought to unfold the conditions against which the neoliberal turn become possible. It is attempted to answer that how this turn happened and what was its implication on the urban. Drawing on the political economy of this period, it is argued that what was once rejected, the West, came back again, but, this time in the form of



neoliberalism. The domination of the economy, however, as the chapter shows, does not abolish Islamification. Quite the contrary, it is integrated and ultimately subordinated to the will of neoliberalism. This fact is shown within two realms; first, the discursive realm in which the neoliberal turn is implemented in legislation and laws. In particular, the First Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (post-revolutionary Parliament) in 1990 was examined. The actuality and externalisation of this move toward the West made up the second realm of examination. Drawing on economic variables such as class mobility, the change in private and public capital, privatisation, etc., the impact of imposing structural adjustment on Iran's economy was analysed. After discussing the political and economic implications of the neoliberal policies, this chapter brought urban problematic into consideration. Analysing the impact of these new urban projects on the Tehran, it is shown that once again the space of Tehran became a medium for capital circulation in the neoliberal period.

However, as this thesis claims, the logic of dialectic, as at once the epistemological framework of understanding the dynamic of reality and the ontological condition of urban phenomenon, necessitates the existence of the third term. If in neoliberalisation (first term) came across at the end of the war period to negate the prevailed Islamification (second term) and they ultimately reconciled in the second decade of the revolution, then, what the third term is that destabilises the status quo and acts as a prime mover of the neoliberal period?

The third term is hidden between pages of history, omitted from written scripts. It is unwritten lines yet to be written down. During the 1990s there was a series of riots in peripheries of big cities which today you are not able to find so much information on those events. It is as if they have not been documented to be fade away from our collective consciousness. In a few

magazines that reflected those events at the time they were named 'bread riots'. In one case, residents of Islamshahr, an informal settlement in the southern west of Tehran, came into the streets protesting against the rising price of public transportation. In one they the number of rebellions rose to 50 thousand people marching toward Tehran. The government had to employ its armoured forces to suppress the riot. The same riots happened in the peripheries of other big cities such as Mashhad and Qazvin. What is intriguing is the quality and scale of these riots. While in the pre-revolutionary period resistant movements were embodied in the form of mass revolution against above-forcing modernisation, and in the first decade of post-revolutionary time there were manifested in the form of women protest against mandatory Islamic code of dressing, in the neoliberal era one can observe the emergence of riots by residue of neoliberal urbanisation reclaiming their rights to a collective urban life, to an urban society they're actively making yet are hitherto disenfranchised from (Merrifield, 2017). Furthermore, the geographies of these riots have a lot to learn. Prior resistances were mainly concentrated in the centre of cities, whether it be revolutionary combats or anti-Islamic protest. The resistance of neoliberal era, however, ignited from peripheries since they were the residue of so-called urban development either expelled from the city centres or had not been permitted to get into. Therefore, the third term of the neoliberal period came across to negate the conflicting, though reconciling, union of neoliberalisation and Islamification of the second decade of the revolution.



# Conclusion

This thesis was an attempt to present a Lefebvrian reading of the transformation of contemporary Tehran. It sought to show how Tehran has dialectically undergone through different epochs. Based on these epochs, I attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1- How did the incorporation of Tehran into the world system transform the meaning of the urban and its practices and what was the implication of this new condition on the pre-revolutionary Tehran?
- 2- How were the forces of the production of Tehran subordinated to the requirements of Islamification during revolutionary epoch?
- 3- How did neoliberalism change the process of production of space in the second decade of the revolution by negating while preserving Islamic ideology?

To do so, Lefebvre's ideas proved to be insightful. Lefebvre's thought combines varied levels of analysis from individual to the urban, national, and global. This multi-level analysis was crucial for my research since Tehran's transformation was the result of multi-scalar varied forces working in different yet connected domains. Touching upon Lefebvrian dialectic, the study prevents falling into a causal reasoning. By taking into account the synchronic interrelation of diverse forces, dialectical logic empowers us to keep the tensions between these factors alive. Against this background, Tehran's development must be seen as interactions of varied elements and interpenetration of diverse scales.

Although Lefebvre's theoretical constellation proved very insightful, it does not mean that the present research is merely a Lefebvrian reading of the transformation of Tehran. Additionally, it is a rearticulation and reconstruction of Lefebvre's theory through the particular characteristics of Tehran. This particularity, is captured by means of postcolonial interpretation

of Lefebvre's thought. To draw on postcolonial theory to capture the particularity of Tehran, it acts like a double-edged sword. While insisting on the specificity of a locality provides us with a possibility to discover an unwritten geography, it runs a risk of getting trapped in a kind of localism that is disconnected to the enriched universal urban theories. The current literature on urban postcolonial theories, in fact, has revealed to be as much fruitful, in terms of grasping new geographies of theory, as futile, in terms of isolated localism. Postcolonial theorists criticise Eurocentric social scientists as they treated knowledge produced in the global South as primarily raw empirical data and information, to be made sense of by utilizing theories advanced by Western scholars (Sheppard et al, 2013). Quite contrary, they believe that applying Western categories to read the non-West geographies with different social, economic, and political histories would not be helpful. Therefore, "alternative theorizations will require that urban scholars take seriously the distinct situated knowledge that emerge in and through Southern livelihood practices" (Ibid: 898).

Following this, one can witness the proliferation of urban research under the flag of postcolonialism or informality over the past decade or so that have delved into local places in order to grasp their particularities and to articulate their differences and divergences.

In this regards, Simone talks of 'pirate towns' to specifies the particularity of African cities. He explores the potential usefulness of deploying a notion of piracy, the better to come to grips with the radical remaking of urban life in much of Africa (Simone, 2006: 357). Piracy, then, is defined as the act of taking things out of their normal frameworks of circulation and use. Piracy becomes more relevant concept if we set African cities within a wider context of global capitalism. In the face of increasing rate on imports, liberalisation of international trade, and privatisation many African cities have lost their productive capacities. Moreover, "the material

legacies produced by architectures of colonial power provide a specific infrastructure of capitalist penetration. This infrastructure permits a highly targeted and truncated articulation that maximises economic profit for selected actors” (Ibid, 358). Simone states that his condition is quite unique requiring a set of new concepts different from dominant European categories. In the urban centres deprived of the essential economic infrastructure, urban dwellers seek other ways to meet their needs.

The articulation of particularity can be found in the work of Yiftachel as well. Exploring the urban condition within the context of Israel-Palestine struggle, he proposes the concept of Gray space denoting the practice of indefinitely positioning populations between the lightness of legality, safety and full membership, and the darkness of eviction, destruction and death (Yiftachel, 2009). By this, he deals with a political geography of urban informality that growing across the globe. He believes the expansion of gray spaces signifies the emergence a form of colonial relationships that are backed by urban government. Urban planning along with varied means of surveillance and modern technologies of control, have resulted in a regime that works as a creeping apartheid.

In the same manner, Bayat proposes the concept of ‘the quiet encroachment of the ordinary’ under the context of Iranian and Egyptian cites. Seeking to go beyond the shortage of the old concepts, it is described as the “silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives” (Bayat, 2000: 545). This is a daily struggle, open-ended, without leadership, specific ideology or predetermined structure. People who are involved in quiet encroachment do not interpret their actions as a political strategy. Rather, they are understood as routine actions which stem from necessity of meeting daily needs.

Attempts to liberate global South from European colonising epistemology are variegated and multifaceted. McFarlane, for instance, demands to move beyond Eurocentric categories by, following Jennifer Robinson (2002), employing a cosmopolitan approach to urban studies. This approach, McFarlane argues, “seeks to bring more cities into view in the construction of theory, and that does so through a post-colonial critique of generalised, Euro-American analytic categories (McFarlane, 2008: 343).

These attempts to dislocate urban theories, however, invoke specific concerns on building separate theoretical edifice which is completely disconnected to the historically already-produced urban knowledge. In other words, provincializing Europe might lead to parochialization of urban thought in which each archipelago has its own parameters and measure of validity. To stretch it further, delving into locality runs the risk of epistemological relativism defying any common ground for dialogue within different geographies. Therefore, as Chibber mentions (2013), by invoking a fundamental divergence between the West and the East, postcolonial theory replaces universalism by localism. However, the idea of fundamental divergence has its own fallacy. Instead of fundamental divergence, Chibber suggests, the West and the non-West turn out to be variants of the same species (2013:23). According to the critics of postcolonialism, believing in the same essence enhances us to apply universal categories such as capitalism, Marxism, Liberalism, political economy, and so on, to different places while being aware of their differences. Rather than searching a completely new set of notions, scholars merely need to bring the differences into account and ‘modify’ universal concepts.

Rejecting to translate the historical differences of the West and the non-West to simple empirical variations, Roy (2009) argues that it is not merely empirical uniqueness of cities in global south as a mandate for adding empirical variation to existing urban theory. Quite

contrary, it is the very concepts and theoretical categories that require to be transformed. Thus, the reduction of historical differences to empirical variations, which is implicit in Chibber's argument, prevents reaching to the root of the urban studies problematics. Furthermore, Roy reveals the confusion between universalisation and globalisation in Chibber's idea. In this regards, Chakrabarty (2000) contends that no historic form of capital, however, global in its reach, can ever be a universal... globalization of capital is not the same as capital's universalization.

This distinction between the global and the universal resonates Lefebvre's perspective where he emphasises that despite the spread of urbanisation across the world it does not mean that a singular form of urbanisation becomes universal. In other words, we must distinguish between universalisation which denotes the generalisation of a theoretical category to other geographies and globalisation which highlights the extent of the effect of a phenomenon. In the case of urban globalisation, we encounter the extension of the effects of urbanisation across other remote geographies, whereas universalisation of urbanisation we are faced to a claim of applying already-generated urban categories, mainly produced in Western academia, to other spaces.

In this thesis, I implicitly attempted to interweave Lefebvre with postcolonialism. Having Tehran as the subject of research, it is aimed to prevent applying universal Eurocentric categories which are indifferent to the historical and empirical variations. Thus, these categories, as universal abstractions, had to be concretised in the context of Tehran. Mediated by introducing determinations into them, urban categories underwent a process of concretisation or what Lefebvre termed 'concrete abstraction'. At the same time, I endeavoured not to trapped into a simple localism by getting exclusively involved into Iranian condition and discourses. In this regard, this research was an attempt to put urban global ideas into dialectical dialogue with

Tehran's particular conditions. In so doing, on the one hand, universal urban discourse was critically applied to a non-West city, namely Tehran and, on the other hand, Tehran's particularities were introduced into the global urban thought.

In the theoretical chapter, I have reviewed those academic attempts that aim at grasping this particularity. Each of these four reviewed theories of Tehran/Iran has looked upon Iran from a specific angle. The common ground, however, is the belief that Western theories have not been able to represent the particularities of Iran. They are partly true in their claim, although, they themselves suffer from one-sided analysis neglecting the multiplicity of the social phenomena in general and the urban in particular. These theories are not able to grasp the dialectical nature of the relation between the West and Iran both in terms of practices and concepts.

Unlike these theories, this study begins with Western categories and then carry on by exposing the divergence engendered by particular conditions of Iran. Founded on Lefebvrian outlook, it brings to the fore the singularity of Tehran attempting to transcend Lefebvre's theory into the next level by submitting it to new elements such as Islamification. Therefore, the reconstruction of transformation of Tehran, through the present thesis, has gone hand in hand with the transformation of Lefebvre himself. Beside the theoretical chapter, in which I attempt to reinterpret him mainly through Hegelian root, Lefebvre's thoughts have been interwoven with the story of Tehran. Among them is his diachronic and synchronic dialectic that have formed the skeleton of my research. The former dialectic emphasises on the philosophy of development of Tehran. Diachronic dialectic, it has been shown, reveals the way in which the space of Tehran is produced by intersection and interaction of diverse forces in the course of history. As long as the history of Tehran concerns, modern Tehran was founded on the politics of modernisation

from above in the reign of monarchs. The Islamic revolution, however, was the negating element for that modernisation. This negation, as repeatedly said, at once demolished, preserved, and transcended the old space. Hence, after the subsidence of revolutionary rage despite the diffusion of Islamic practices and discourses, signs of modernisation came to surface once again. This includes modern institutions such as schools and universities, hospitals, army, parliament, etc., industrial infrastructure, separation of power, and so on. In this respect, we should name the post-revolutionary era as Islamic modernisation.

By the end of the first decade of the revolution, however, the new element came across negating the Islamic spirit of the previous period. This is what I have called neoliberal turn. Introduced by IMF, a series of neoliberal policy were put into agenda. So, the emphasis on the social justice as one of the underlying goal of the Islamic revolution was replaced by the idea of progress and development.

This diachronic story of Tehran would give us an insufficient picture of the production of space of Tehran if it is not supplemented with synchronic dialectic. Synchronic dialectic denotes the dialectical interrelations between varied forces from different levels within a certain spatial territory. In this research three forces, namely economic processes, Islamification, and resistant actions, have been highlighted as the constituent element of space. Although these forces are expressed on and mediated by the urban as an intermediate level, each of them work on a diverse level. What Lefebvre suggests, here, is the distinction between far order and near order. Far order is the level of society as a whole with its constitutive elements and its history. Regulating society by its institutions (among which the most powerful are Church and State), by a legal code, and by a culture, global forces are projected into the practico-material reality, that is the city, and are embodied in its spatial configuration (Lefebvre, 1996). On the other hand, near



order denotes the level of everyday life; the relationships of individuals in groups and the relationships of these groups among themselves.

What Iran's particularity can add to this is to distinguish between global level and national level. Taking the differences between Iran, as peripheral node, and France, where is Lefebvre's geography of theorisation, it has been shown that there is a tension between global and national forces.

Given this, this study was structured based on varied forces working on four levels, that is the global, the national, the urban, and the individual. These varied forces are categorised in three domains namely political economy, Islamic ideology, and space of resistance.

Against this background, chapter three dealt with the integration of Iran into the global order. It begins with Tehran's appropriation by Qajar dynasty in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later on, the advancement in transportation systems and the development of communication technologies paved the way of incorporation of Iran into the world system. At the same time, the defeat of the Iranian state in a series of wars against Russian empire constituted a novel consciousness stressing a sense of backwardness among Iranian. Following this, the Qajar courtier found the solution for this backwardness in following European path of progress. This led to the projection of Western thoughts and policies on the ground of Iran.

Drawing on the Lefebvre's concepts, it was discussed that during this period the relation between town and country reversed. This was mainly because of the growth of the international trade so that the country, that had once been an independent self-sufficient unit, began to produce for city centres. Moreover, consumption found an unprecedented significance and subsequently took over production. The result was the substitution of the subsistence farming

with the cash crops one. Hence was the proliferation of Western consuming products in Tehran's markets.

While applying Lefebvre's theory, the thesis emphasises on the historical differences between Iran and the West. First of all, unlike the feudalist background of Western countries in which the centre of production and the centre of power had been concentrated in the country, in Iran the power apparatus was founded in cities separating itself from the loci of production in the country. The condition of possibility of this separation relies on the existence of absentee landlords which was one of the marked characteristics of Iranian peasantry. Owning vast parts of agricultural lands, absentee landlords usually lived in cities. They also acted as mediators between country and town by transferring surplus products of the countryside to cities. This helped the reversal from the country to the town went more easily without any significant resistance from the country.

Secondly, in the absence of an actual bourgeois class, the role of the state in moulding space became essential. Against this background, the Pahlavi state put on the agenda a series of modernising projects that profoundly transformed the space of Tehran. Not only did it include the urban projects, but also forming an organic modern bureaucratic class along with its inherent institutions. In this case, therefore, we must talk about a particular 'state mode of production' in which the state forms classes rather than vice versa. In effect, this state mode of production sought to pave way for the creation and advancement of capitalist relations including forging a national integrated market, the prevalence of wage labour, and free movement of goods and labour power, or as Harvey nicely put, to solve the issue of absorbing of capital and labour surpluses by means of investment in physical and social infrastructure (Harvey, 1985, 1989).

Furthermore, it is discussed, that the discovery of oil, as the third difference, triggered the process of dismantling the town-country relations. Oil revenues led to the relative independence of the city from the economic surplus of the country. Ultimately, it was shown, the town-country binary was replaced by a novel binary of centre-periphery.

At the end of the chapter, the implication of this new condition were summarised. In this regard, the process of commodification and, in Lefebvrian language, fetishism of land were elaborated. Moreover, Tehran witnessed an occurrence of diminishing of *mahalleh* (neighbourhood) as the old constitutive unit of the city in pre-history of urbanisation. Finally, the emergence of satellite cities, as the consequence of this urbanisation, was highlighted. It was argued that following this process of financialisation of land, the modern production of Tehran, resulted in what Lefebvre calls the deportation of low-income workers into *banalieux*, which were being located ever further away (Lefebvre, 2014: 203). This expelled group along with those new comers did not have any other choice but to inhabit in the nearest settlements around Tehran.

The next chapter examine the effect of the Islamic revolution on the space of Tehran. As an opposing force of the past regime, it came with a rejection of the influence of international forces on Iran. In other words, it negated the space of the Shah replacing it with the Islamic space. Following this, the nationalisation became a dominant trend in the field of political economy. This nationalisation was also a symbolic movement revealing the supremacy of the national level over the global. Negating the old regime policy of modernisation from above, however, the Islamic era kept the element of modernisation. But this time modernisation were set within a new set of relations. The modern idea of women presence in public, for instance, were materialised by mobilising *andaruni*. Keeping with Lefebvrian dialectic, along with modernisation and Islamification we must add the omnipresent third term of Arbab Space

affecting and being affected by the two former terms. So, the negation of Western culture by means of Islamification after the revolution not only de-westernised the space of Iran but also Islamified the Western culture through the hijab. By rejecting certain elements of Western culture such as hijabless women, therefore, the Arbab Space welcomed the public presence of women which, in turn, was an element of modernisation. The result was the transformation of all three terms, namely modernisation, Islamification, and Arbab Space after the revolution. It was suggested, furthermore, we had a process externalisation of the interior and internalisation of the exterior. This concept refers to dislocation of social functions after the revolution. On the one hand, what traditionally used to be kept in homes, namely femininity, went free in Arbab space. Enhanced by the mediatory role of hijab, the streets of Tehran were imbued with womanhood. On the other hand, a variety of social activities, in particular those related to festivities and pleasure, which had been formerly prevailed in Tehran, were wiped off the city and confined to Ra'yaat space. Moreover, in accordance with the transformation of the space of subjectification, the source of surveillance changed too. The head of the household, father, was replaced by the revolutionary state. Streets and squares became the loci of power exertion over women protecting Islamic principles of Arbab Space and not to be transgressed by rebel bodies.

If externalisation of the interior was one side of the 1979 revolution, as we have seen in the case of women and hijab, internalisation of the exterior would have been the supplementary side of this Islamic space. It is through this double process that post-revolutionary space of Tehran mediates between Islamification and modernization.

In the same period, we witnessed the emergence of new space of resistance. This is defined as a space where the urban flees from being entangled by dominating tendency. It is the space of

the residual remaining out of the realm of representation, those particularities that are not captured by predominant signs and symbols. It is partly inspired by Lefebvre's space of representation. "Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabitants and users.

It was discussed that marginalised group, including migrants, refugees, the unemployed, squatters, and street vendors employed the politic of 'the quiet encroachment of the ordinary': a silent, patient, protracted, and pervasive advancement of ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive hardships and better their lives.

Hijab protest was another form of resistance targeting the imposed Islamic ideology of the post-revolutionary era. In this sense, Tehran witnessed the first signs of conflict between Islamification and women presence in Arbab space.

The end of Iran-Iraq war signifies the beginning of a new era. This is named the return of the negated because after a decade of primacy of the national level now it was global forces that had come to the scene once more. Nowhere than the field of economy did this return show itself better. the arrival of members of IMF and World Bank to Iran was accompanied with the policy of structural adjustment. Hence, the neoliberal policies were put into motion. Foreign debt, deregulation, privatization, and trade liberalisation marked the reconciliation of the West and the East. Once again, the ideal of development and progress took over the ideal of social justice.

In the course of hegemonisation of development and progress rhetoric, the idea of the common good was sacrificed for the ideal of individuality and self-interest. The law of Independency of City Hall intensified this situation. City Hall had to rely on the society rather than oil revenue to cover its expenditure. Therefore, it decided to choose its partners from among upper class

Tehranis in general and land speculators in particular. Following this, the latter were exempted from various regulations and zoning codes such as determined floor area ratio and land use. Hence there was an appearance of high-rise buildings and massive land use changes in the second decade of the revolution. The coalition of the City Hall, as a part of the state apparatus, and private investors and speculators was just the beginning of selling of the urban space, both vertical and horizontal.

This, set the context for investors and speculators to turn the city into a profitable commodity. Soon after, the political economy of verticality found its supplement i.e. the political economy of horizontality. Therefore, the expansion of Tehran toward the west and commercialisation of this area were put into the agenda. However, substantial capital was to be channelled into urban projects and newly constructed malls and shopping centres. Through this process, which Harvey would call creative destruction, City Hall circulated its capital into development projects and inflated land and property prices to its own advantage.

Apart from the fatal result of these projects on the societal characteristics of Tehran such as sense of community, sense of belonging, neighbourhood relationships, and so on, the process of marketising land reached to its highest degree resulting in housing market to become a leading motor of Tehran economy ever since.

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